Morelli House
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

☒ private
☐ public - Local
☐ public - State
☐ public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/SINGLE DWELLING

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: STUCCO, WOOD, CONCRETE BLOCK

roof: TROPICOOL (CRUSHED ROCK)
other:

Morelli House
Name of Property

Clark County, Nevada
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See Continuation Sheet.

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheet.

DESCRIPTION

In 1959, Antonio and Helen Morelli built their home at 52 Country Club Drive within the confines of the prestigious Desert Inn Estates, overlooking the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. In 2001, to save the home from demolition, a fate which befell the other homes within the Estates, the Morelli House was relocated to a parcel at Ninth Street and Bridger Avenue. At its new location, the Morelli House is owned and operated by the Junior League of Las Vegas, which faithfully maintains the 1959 appearance of the home while rehabilitating it as an office, event space, history museum and gallery.

The 1959 "dream house" began with careful planning in 1958. Morelli collaborated with Richard Small, a carpenter foreman and colleague at the Sands, to design the new home. Finally, with the design established, Morelli retained Las Vegas architect, Hugh E. Taylor, to draw the plans. Morelli and Small dedicated two years to planning and constructing the modern residence. Thoughtful preparations and attention to detail distinguished the home from others in the Estates. The rear façade faced north, overlooking the golf course and its sprawling lawns. While other swimming pools in the Estates were in the backyards, the Morelli pool was placed strategically in the front yard, hidden from the street by a cement-block wall and tropical plantings. Where the neighbors' backyard view of the golf course was obstructed with swimming pools, the Morelli backyard presented an unobstructed view. From the golf course, the Morelli House appeared unified with the landscape.

The resulting home was ultra-modern for its day and in a sense continues to defy architectural classification. In some regards, the Morelli House fits architects McAlester and McAlester's "Contemporary" subtype. The flat-roofed subtype of Contemporary is a derivative of the earlier International style, referred to as American International.[1] The house meets the design intent of Populuxe, which according to author Thomas Hine includes qualities as "fun, fashionable, fantastic, and futuristic."[2] According to National Register Bulletin 16A, modern movement styles might be classified as International Style, Miesian, New-formalism, Brutalism, Neo-expressionism, or Ranch style. However, none of these descriptions are exclusively applicable. It is known from individuals employed in the construction of the house that the Morellis were influenced by R. M. Schindler, who built modernist houses in southern California, and by Philip Johnson, who built the Glass House (listed as a National Historic Landmark, 1997) in New Canaan, Connecticut, Helen Morelli's home town. Drawing upon the influences of the first half of the twentieth century, the term to best describe the Morelli House is simply "Modern." Not that "Modern" is all that simple, drawing on diverse and often drastic responses, from American and European, to a new age.

Despite relocation, the Morelli House retains its original massing and fenestration. Essentially rectangular in plan, the overall appearance of the Morelli House is long and low, blending into the landscape. The flat roof is covered with crushed white rock. The architectural plans identify the tar-

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[1] Lee McAlester and Virginia McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) 482.
[2] Thomas Hine. *Populuxe*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 38.

and-gravel roof as "Tropicool with 2 inch gravel surface." It is assumed that Tropicool is a trade name, although conclusive evidence has not been found. The crushed rock glitters in the sunlight. The roof compliments the Modern styling of the house and provides reduced surface temperature. The widely-overhanging eaves are supported by exposed redwood beams. Natural stain provides contrast against the pale gray of the walls and the white of the rock roof. The wall surface is stucco as well as painted redwood with vertical battens, which counteract the structure's extreme horizontality. In several places along the front approach of the house, walls are screened with decorative open-work cement blocks. A row of windows top the screens. Between the top of the screen and the eaves, is an area identified as a gallery by the architect. The decorative cement block screens have been appropriately reconstructed following the relocation and complete the front façade.

The wall of the rear façade consists of vertical wood on the outside of the kitchen and a small ell, which contains the master bedroom and extends a few feet past the rear wall. Between the bedroom and the kitchen is a bank of floor-to-ceiling glass panels, including a sliding glass door, which create the living room wall. A concrete patio extends the length of the rear elevation and is covered partially by broad eaves. The patio replicates the footprint of patio at the original site. Four futuristic metal light fixtures hang from the beams, with smaller matching sconces attached to the metal framework of the windows. The windows and doors are set into aluminum frames and are either fixed or sliders. The exterior doors feature full glass panels, with the exception of the redwood double entry doors.

The double entry doors, painted "robin's egg blue" open to the foyer, which is separated from the living and dining room by a redwood paneled partition designed to conceal a coat closet on the entry side and to reveal china and collectibles on the dining side. The foyer retains the original 1959 feeling and appearance. The original vinyl composition tile remains with a Greek-key design in the corners. Morelli's careful details in the foyer continue throughout the house.

Flanking the double entry doors in the foyer are panels of colored art glass with a roughly corrugated "raindrop" or "teardrop" texture. Above the doors, a leaded-glass panel situates the Morelli House within the history of Las Vegas. The panel was created by local artist Isabel Piczel who also designed the windows for the Mid-Century Modern Guardian Angel Cathedral of Las Vegas, which was constructed in 1963. The stunning panel was given to the Morellis in recognition of their volunteerism and support of the Catholic Church community, including commissioning the windows for the Cathedral. The artwork and its symbolism of generosity define the entrance of the home.

Adjacent to the foyer is the kitchen, complete with breakfast nook and utility area. The clean lines and efficient use of space define the modern kitchen. The original appliances include an antique-copper colored oven, stove with hood, and refrigerator. Other original features include a "bun warmer" drawer, two corner "Lazy-Susan" cabinets, a special cabinet for a Mixmaster, and an enclosed storage area behind the sink. A large built-in island faced with pleated upholstery, echoes an era of stylish Las Vegas lounges. Large, frosted egg-shaped light fixtures hang from the wood plank ceiling. Conical down-lights with small perforated holes add sparkle to the kitchen.

For the Morelli's, the kitchen's breakfast nook was central to the home, providing a convenient place to gather. For Antonio, the nook became a functional place to work on music. For Helen, however, who loved to cook and entertain, this arrangement likely would not last. In the early 1960s, a portion of the breeze-way was enclosed as Antonio's music studio. In 2001, the concrete pad foundation, on which the music studio addition was constructed, prevented the studio from being relocated.

The breakfast nook retains the original look and feeling of 1959. On the west wall, a custom-designed television cabinet swings to reveal a fully equipped bar for entertaining. Following the Morelli's decorative style, memorabilia is displayed on the shelves above the table. Photographs from the 1950s and 1960s depict the house, as well as the guests who frequented it, including Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr.

Adjacent to the kitchen is the utility area. A partition between the kitchen and utility area allows light from the clerestory windows to reach the kitchen and family room. The Morellis later converted a half-bathroom in the utility area into a laundry room. The space was innovative, with a wall of double-sided redwood storage cabinetry, a steel utility sink, and a combination washer-dryer. In 2007, the Junior League eliminated the laundry area to restore the bathroom. The original linoleum flooring remains with white streaks against an orange background set in a grid of blue-green stripes.[3]

The kitchen leads to the dining room, with an original, low cabinet-partition dividing the foyer from the dining room to provide storage on either side. The dining room extends to the living room, a showcase of Mid-Century Modern design. Unpainted redwood beams span front to rear of the house, complete with indirect cove lighting and soffits. A prominent feature in the living room is the fireplace with a raised "floating" marble-topped hearth and a massive, hammered-copper hood. The Morellis considered the homes's north elevation to be the primary façade. Here, floor-to-ceiling glass panels, a section of which includes a sliding-glass door, create the north wall of the living room. Draperies cover the glass wall and operate electronically to "tuck into" a panel next to the fireplace. The living room emphasizes natural materials with Philippine mahogany wall paneling, copper fireplace hood, and expansive glass exposing the landscape. The living and dining rooms exemplify the Mid-Century Modern ideals of beauty in natural materials and harmony in space-defining planes.

Since the Morellis' furnishings were long absent, selecting new furnishings in the living and dining room to complement the home's architectural integrity presented a challenge. Vladimir Kagan, regarded as the "grandfather of modern furniture design," provided design consultation for the furnishings and collaborated with his manufacturers to donate pieces. The cubist dining room set, the grey Nautilus sofa and the royal blue tri-symmetric foot stool in the living room are from Kagan's personal, private collection. His designs are also evident in the living room's burgundy serpentine sofas and ottomans as well as the cocktail table and barrel chairs.[4] Kagan's iconic furniture compliments the architectural style of the home and the features of the living room and dining room. Beyond the living and dining rooms are the bedrooms, identified in the plans as the master bedroom and the guest room. The master bedroom, down a short hallway from the guest bathroom, exhibits Mid-Century Modern architectural features. The high ceilings are modulated by dropped soffits and beams, which repeat those in the living room. Originally, the bed was located on the west wall. The innovative light and security controls for the house remain on each side of where the bed was located.

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[3] Dr. Robert Fielden, a prominent architect in Las Vegas, and Alan Hess, a well-known preservationist and writer specializing in Mid-Century Modern architecture, confirm that the use of such colorful, modern manufactured materials and patterns is in keeping with the period: Fielden, interview; Hess, 18.

The master bedroom includes separate dressing rooms; Helen's with built-in three-way mirrors, drawers and closets and Antonio's with a mirrored cabinet for his ties, are typical of well-planned storage in a Mid-Century Modern home. The dressing rooms lead to the master bathroom, a "primary space," restored to former luxury. The bath, with a sunken custom-tiled-shower and an elevated sink, accommodated Antonio's tall frame. Dual sinks, colored plumbing fixtures, a step-down open shower, and Antonio's monogram "AM" on the faucets highlight the space. In the mirror over the dual sinks is the original and still operable modernistic clock. Custom turquoise gold-flecked ceramic tiles cover the sinks and the shower. During the move, a few of the shower tiles were damaged beyond repair. Since additional, original tiles were no longer available, the Junior League replaced the damaged tiles with harmoniously contrasting tiles rather than replicating the original tiles. The separate dressing rooms and bathroom retain their original feeling and appearance.

Opposite the master bedroom is the spacious guest bedroom with an elegantly-appointed connecting bath with custom tile. Decorated by the Morellis, the original yellow wallpaper, yellow tile and bathroom fixtures remain. The workmanship around the tile sinks and the detailed floor evidence the care of the architect and builder. The faucets in the sink exhibit Morelli's signature monogram. The guest bedroom and bathroom complete the interior of the home.

From planning the front approach of the home to monogramming the bathroom faucets, Antonio Morelli scrutinized every detail of the home. One detail would distinguish the Morelli House from all other homes within the Desert Inn Country Club Estates, namely, a crawl space. With the exception of the Morelli House, the other homes were constructed on a concrete foundation. The detail of a crawl space allowed the Morelli House to be saved from demolition and moved to a new location. The reason for moving the structure far exceeded the practical aspect of its having a crawl space, however: The Junior League in consultation with preservationists selected the Morelli House as the most significant expression of period design.

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[4] Kagan is an internationally-known designer. His furniture is in the permanent collections of many museums including the Albert Museum in London, the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York and the San Francisco Museum of Modern. The World Market Center honored him with their Design Icon Award in January of 2007. Interviews with Sherry Colquitt and Dedee Nave.

At its original location at 52 Country Club Drive, the rear façade faced north, overlooking the golf course and its sprawling verdant lawns. The view through the living room's expansive glass windows blurred the distinction between indoors and outdoors. At its new location at 861 East Bridger Avenue, the rear façade faces the new site's northern perimeter. The Morelli House again blends with its environment. The "desert landscape" mandated by the local government compliments the home's pale grey exterior walls, exposed redwood beams, and Edward Durell Stone style decorative open-work cement screen. The latter feature is similar to that used by Stone at his celebrated 1958 American Embassy in New Delhi. Although the original cement screen was destroyed, an appropriate new screen replicates the original. The screens are topped by clerestory windows through which one can see the beams extending from the exterior into the interior of the house. The Morelli house is an excellent early example of Modern architecture in Las Vegas and is important to understanding the architectural history and the development of the area.

Integrity

The Morelli house suffers a loss of integrity having been relocated from its original location. In its new location, the house sits adjacent to the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991) and across from the Las Vegas High School (individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996). Since 1993 the Las Vegas High School has served the greater Clark County area as the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing and Visual Arts, and thus harmonizes with the history of the Morelli House.

The interior and exterior of the home retain the highest degree of integrity. The primary spaces, including the exterior, entrance, foyer, kitchen-breakfast nook, dining room, living room and the guest and master bathrooms, have been restored to their original state under the *Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitation*. The secondary spaces, including the master and guest bedrooms, have been rehabilitated for office purposes. Even as offices, the open rooms retain the original sense of space.[5]

The integrity of the Morelli House has been faithfully maintained throughout the decades. In 1979, following Antonio's death and Helen's subsequent relocation to the East,[6] Kay G. Glenn, Howard Hughes' press secretary, purchased the Morelli's home. For over twenty years, Glenn meticulously maintained the home and property.[7]

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[5] Dr. Janet White of UNLV's Department of Architecture evaluated the architectural significance of the Morelli House to the City of Las Vegas.

[6] Helen moved back East in 1979, five years after her husband's death, due to health related issues. She was one of nine siblings and needed to be nearer to family members. In an oral interview with Jerry Massini, 1976, she stated she intended to remain in Las Vegas until her death.

[7] Carole Cosgrove Terry. *The Morelli House – Rescued and Restored. 2010, 7.*

In 2000, Steve Wynn purchased the Desert Inn Resort and approximately 30 lots within the Desert Inn Estates.[8] Wynn proceeded to acquire the remaining lots in the Desert Inn Estates in preparation for new development. Plans for the new Wynn Megaresort along the famed Las Vegas Boulevard necessitated demolition of the Desert Inn Resort and all structures located in the Desert Inn Estates, including the Morelli House.[9] This monumental land acquisition bordered by the Las Vegas Boulevard, Paradise Road and Twain Avenue jeopardized many Mid-Century Modern homes. Wynn's negotiators, members of the Molasky Group, including the elder Molasky, who in 1952 developed the original community, presented offers well-above appraised value to the estate homeowners. Some homeowners willingly accepted the agreement price and provisions, while others delayed acceptance for up to four years with protracted courtroom disputes.[10]

In the midst of the contractual dealings with the homeowners, Steven Wynn and Kay Glenn noted the Morelli House was integral to entertainment history and was exemplary of Mid-Century Modern design. Since the house was the only house in the Estates constructed with a crawl space, it could be moved.[11] Wynn and Glenn determined that the Molasky Group, on their behalf, should appeal to the Junior League of Las Vegas to relocate the house to a parcel on Bridger Avenue adjacent to the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District with the intention of preservation. (The Bridger Avenue parcel was purchased with the assistance of the Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs).

On September 30, 2001, the League rescued and relocated the Morelli House to the Bridger Avenue.[12] There was no way to save the decorative screen imbedded in the ground, Morelli's music room built on a concrete slab, nor the front yard's concrete carport and the swimming pool. Following the move, the screen has been reconstructed and the Junior League intends to reconstruct the music room. Although the Bridger Avenue parcel does not comfortably allow for the carport or the swimming pool, the parcel does allow for the reconstruction of the music room addition.

The Morelli House continues to be integrated within its environment, despite relocation, and is sited diagonally to the corner with a circular drive fronting the dwelling.[13] Foliage complements features of an earlier time, while rock groundcover conforms to drought resistant landscape codes. The rear façade, which once faced the second fairway, now faces the new site's northern perimeter.

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[8] Heather Rawlyk. "Former D.I. Homeowner tells of decline of golf estates," *Las Vegas Sun.* Monday, November 10, 2003.

[9] Grace Long. "Wynn sues homeowners in battle for control of D.I. Association," *Las Vegas Sun.* Friday, November 3, 2000.

[10] Adrienne Parker. "Rift between Wynn, estate residents grow," *Las Vegas Sun.*Tuesday, May 28, 2002.

[11] Hess, House Essay, 6.

[12] Mohor, "House finds a New Home" *Las Vegas Sun.* October 1, 2001

[13] Hess, 6.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☒ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1959

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Antonio Morelli

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Hugh E. Taylor, Antonio Morelli, Richard Small

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance is the year in which the Morelli House was constructed.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

In 2001, to avoid pending demolition the Morelli House was relocated and rehabilitated by the Junior League of Las Vegas.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

N/A

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #__________
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #__________
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #__________

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: ____________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

The loss of integrity as a consequence of the relocation is mitigated to a degree by the proximity of the Las Vegas High School, now the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing and Visual Arts. The institution focuses on education in the arts, a mission Morelli strove to promote.

Although the Morelli House is the only Mid-Century Modern home in the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District vicinity, the distinctive architecture complements the other historically-important buildings within the district. The nearness to downtown Las Vegas makes the Morelli House serviceable as a community cultural venue and as a meeting place for organizations promoting volunteerism. The Morelli House Public Program provides public access to view the house and to learn its architectural and historical significance. The Junior League of Las Vegas has restored Morelli House, constructed in 1959 and relocated in 2001, in both its exterior and interior appearance in accordance with the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

In 1959, Antonio and Helen Morelli built their home at 52 Country Club Drive within the confines of the prestigious Desert Inn Estates, overlooking the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. In 2001, to save the home from demolition, a fate which befell the other homes within the Estates, the Morelli House was relocated to a parcel at Ninth Street and Bridger Avenue. At its new location, the Morelli House is owned and operated by the Junior League of Las Vegas, who faithfully maintains the 1959 appearance of the home while rehabilitating it as an office, event space, history museum and gallery.

The Morelli House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a dwelling representing an upper-middle-class example of Mid-Century Modern style developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a period of the city's flamboyant and rapid growth. Although the resource has been moved, the outstanding degree of its integrity, particularly regarding its significant interior spaces, combined with being an excellent expression of this architectural style, warrants listing in the National Register under this criterion.

In addition to the consideration of the resource under Criterion C, it is possible to document significance under criteria A and B. Documentation under these criteria is presented only for context since listing under these criteria is not possible given that the resource has been moved.

The Morelli House is documented under Criterion A for its association with the emerging image of Las Vegas as an international capital of the entertainment industry, and for Antonio Morelli's association with the famed "Rat Pack." Because no other Las Vegas resources survive that are related to the Southern Nevada emergence of the Rat Pack, the Morelli House can be regarded as having national significance. Unfortunately, the move of the structure diminishes its integrity, and it is not possible to assert its national significance or to warrant listing as a National Historic Landmark.

The Morelli House is documented under Criterion B at the local level for its association with builder and owner, Antonio Morelli, who was vital to the community through his work as music director at the Sands Hotel and through his extensive involvement in community-wide musical activities.

Criterion C[1]

The Morelli House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, for its modernistic style of architecture. The Morelli House was built in 1959 in the prestigious Desert

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[1] As indicated above, the discussion under Criterion C draws heavily from the corresponding discussion in Harmon, "Morelli House." In addition, the importance of the architecture is discussed in Ronald M. James and Elizabeth Safford Harvey, *Nevada's Historic Buildings: A Cultural Legacy* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2009).

Inn Estates overlooking the second fairway at the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. The Desert Inn was the fifth casino property to be built along the Las Vegas Strip, and was the Strip's premier resort for over a decade. Although the resort was the first country club community built in Las Vegas, it was not originally designed as a housing development. The first homes on the resort grounds were for the use of owner and developer, Wilbur Clark, his executives, and high rollers, including Howard Hughes. Desert Inn Estates was developed in 1952, two years after the opening of the Desert Inn Casino and Resort. The 65 parcels encircled the golf course to the east of the hotel, with open desert land beyond. A few years later, 15 interior parcels were developed under the name of Desert Inn Estates 2. The average parcel size was .25 acre with double lots interspersed. Desert Inn Estates was the first Las Vegas development with modern architectural design. As such, notable individuals opted to build homes in the Estates, including Keely Smith and Betty Grable and her husband, bandleader Harry James. Bob Miller, Nevada's governor from 1989 to 1999, grew up in Desert Inn Estates. The modern design aesthetic appealed to many, especially to Antonio and Helen Morelli.

The Morelli House was built in 1959 by Antonio Morelli, who desired a modern style for his house in the Desert Inn Estates and collaborated with the Sands Hotel and Casino's carpenter foreman, Richard Small. Together the two men designed and ultimately built the house at 52 Country Club Drive after Las Vegas architect Hugh E. Taylor drew the plans. Richard Small was the master carpenter at the Sands, but he also built several custom homes in town. Small first came to Nevada from Montana during the depression to work in the silver mines at Silver Peak. Although he traveled back to Montana, he returned to Las Vegas during World War II and later worked as the carpenter foreman at the Nevada Test Site, where he built structures used in the atomic test shots.

Richard Small's son Michael, was a teenager when the Morelli House was built. Michael and his older brother Richard helped their father with the construction. Michael Small recalls construction details, as well as conversations with Morelli about his vision for his home. According to Small, the Morellis were influenced by Rudolf Schindler's "window wall" houses in Palm Springs, and Philip Johnson's "Glass house" in New Canaan, Connecticut, Helen's home town.[2] The Las Vegas house was to be comfortable and casual. Natural wood was important to Morelli, as it was to Schindler. Small recalls redoing the redwood ceiling three times before Morelli was satisfied.

That Rudolf Schindler served as inspiration for the Morelli House is appropriate, since Schindler developed his architectural style in the 1920s in the sunny climate of southern California, an area that has strongly influenced Las Vegas architecture for decades. Schindler studied architecture and engineering in his native Austria. Inspired by architect Adolf Loos, Schindler came to the United States in 1914. Disappointed with America, Schindler was planning to return to Austria when he secured a position at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesen studio. In 1920, Wright sent Schindler to Los Angeles to oversee construction of the Barnsdall house, known today as the Hollyhock house. Upon completion of the Hollyhock house, Schindler stayed in California, opening his own practice. By

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[2] Michael Small, personal communication May 9, 2001.

1928, Schindler developed a particular vision of architecture that is reflected in Morelli's plans for his home, "The sense for the perception of architecture is not the eyes, but living. Our life is its image."[3] Philip Johnson, an early proponent of the International Style, worked with the early modernist masters from Europe, including Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and J.J.P. Oud, along with masters from the United States, including Schindler, and his colleague and fellow Austrian, Richard Neutra. Beginning in 1946, Johnson undertook the building of his own home in New Canaan, Connecticut that would interpret "the worship of glass we inherited from [German pioneers] Scheerbart and Taut."[4] Johnson's ideals are also reflected in the Morelli House: "I was building an American house. I like to get outdoors quickly, so I raised it [only] two steps above the ground...."[5]

Philip Johnson went on to other design realms, like postmodernism, but Schindler, who died in 1953, practiced his art in the temperate regions of southern California, as well as the desert environment of Palm Springs, with a climate similar to Las Vegas. Even his early houses sported flat roofs with wide overhangs, and window walls to bring the outdoors in and meld the building with the site. One of Schindler's design principles was that nothing be tied down, "Once an architect begins to worry about tying things down and about correct spacings, he arrives only at formal harmonies, and these have little to do with living."[6] The Morelli House displays this sense of not being tied down, as Morelli's vision was to avoid formalism in order to create a place for living, rather than for show.

The Morelli House drew upon the legacies of two great architects, and helped establish for Las Vegas a tradition of distinctive and adventurous architecture. Despite the fact that some integrity was lost when the house was moved from its original location along the Desert Inn Golf Course, the Morelli House remains a significant element of Las Vegas' architectural history.

The modern style of the Morelli House was revolutionary for Las Vegas. Other custom homes of the time were merely expanded ranch-style forms. The Morelli House brought vaulted ceilings to the desert and the concept of integrating the building with the site, particularly effective in a golf course development. In a May 2, 2001 telephone conversation, UNLV professor of architecture, Janet White, interpreted the site plan of the Morelli House and its relationship to its setting. The window-wall façade, facing the golf course, was the front of the home - its monumental façade. The site was of the utmost importance to the structure, as were its proportions. The original plans show a different front arrangement, with a 6-foot-high block wall set in zig-zags, creating a dynamic approach. The pool was built behind the wall, sheltered from the street. Morelli's neighbors built pools on the golf course side of their homes, providing no privacy for swimmers, and interfering with the buildings' interplay with the golf course. Morelli understood the relationship between building and grounds and between exteriors and interiors; he admired clean lines paired with eschewed ornamental plantings.

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[3] McCoy 1960:149-150.

[4] Webb 1994:36.

[5] Webb 1994:36.

[6] McCoy 1960:174-175.

According to Robert Fielden, a prominent architect in Las Vegas, and Alan Hess, a well-known preservationist and writer specializing in Mid-Century Modern architecture, the Morelli House exemplifies, particularly in its interiors, the California Movement of the American International School of that style. The Morelli House fits architects McAlester and McAlester's label of "Contemporary," another term for American International, a derivative of the International style seen since the 1910s in the works of R. M. Schindler and Richard Neutra in Southern California and of the internationally-known architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.[7] The Morelli House also meets the design intent of "Populuxe" which author Thomas Hine describes as "fun, fashionable, fantastic and futuristic."[8] Directed by owners, Antonio and Helen Morelli, architect, Hugh E. Taylor, incorporated Mid-Century Modern features in his design such as the widely overhanging eaves and expansive glass windows.[9] The modernist houses of R. M. Schlindler and the "Glass house" of Philip Johnson inspired the Morellis and Taylor. According to Alan Hess, the Morelli House is a "mature and excellent design that illustrates the popularity and progressiveness of Modern architecture in mid-century Las Vegas."[10]

To quote Hess: "The historic Antonio and Helen Morelli House preserved by the Junior League of Las Vegas...is a vibrant reminder of the newness, optimism and style in Las Vegas in the mid-twentieth century. The house's bold horizontal lines, glass walls, open plan, and natural materials embody the fundamental tenants of [Mid-Century] Modern architecture and Modern living in that period."

For nearly twenty years, Antonio and Helen Morelli made this modern house their home. In 1978, following Antonio's death, Helen sold the home to Kay Glenn. Glenn had been Howard Hughes' press secretary from 1951 until the millionaire's death in 1976. For over twenty years, Glen meticulously maintained the home and property. In 2000, Steve Wynn purchased the Desert Inn with the intent to demolish it, the golf course, and the homes in the Desert Inn Estates. In 2001, the Junior League rescued and relocated the house for rehabilitation on their Bridger Avenue parcel.

Criterion A

The Morelli House is significant for the critical role its owner played in developing a persona for Las Vegas as an entertainment capital of the world but because of the move of the structure, this nomination does not argue for listing under Criterion A. The information is presented here for context only. Anotnio Morelli set the standard at the Sands Hotel and Casino with creativity, musical perfection, and a classy presentation, affecting how Las Vegas stages would present themselves for the rest of the century and into the next. In particular, Morelli played a role in the début of the "Rat Pack," which first performed on his stage.

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[7] Dr. Robert Fielden, oral interview by Carole C. Terry, May 25, 2010. Alan Hess, "A New Architecture for a New City." *The Morelli House*. (Las Vegas: Junior League of Las Vegas, 2008) 25. Lee McAlester and Virginia McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) 482.

[8] Thomas Hine. *Populuxe*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 38.

[9] Taylor was inspired by architect Wayne McAllister when creating the large, sheltering roof at the Morelli House entrance. Hess, "Architecture." 10.

[10] Hess, "Architecture." 19.

When Jack Entratter, president of the Sands Hotel and Casino, suggested that Morelli relocate to Las Vegas, the conductor had much to consider. In the post World War II era, with the popularity of the television, the East Coast theater circuit was declining. As a result, employment opportunities in traditional theater were becoming scarce. Morelli assessed that Las Vegas might be an unexpected opportunity worth pursuing. Las Vegas provided "a newly minted realm of entertainment,"[11] wherein Antonio Morelli would soon be known as "Maestro Morelli."

During what became his twenty year career in Las Vegas, Morelli helped transform the city into a popular, highly-regarded entertainment venue. Along with the celebrity headliners, Jack Entratter promoted Morelli's Las Vegas presence with regular billing on the Sands pylon sign reading "Antonio Morelli and his Music" or "Antonio Morelli and his Orchestra." People came to know Morelli. As stated by a local vocalist, it was hard to miss him with "his mustache, elegant demeanor and Caddy Convertible. He was ...an elegant gentleman in our city."[12]

When Morelli first arrived in town, he realized, "the Sands was the envy of the other hotels" with its headliners, including Frank Sinatra, Danny Thomas, Red Skelton, Lena Horne, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr.[13] Morelli also realized, that the Sands 18-member orchestra may have been the best, but it was simply a brass band since "string sections were not the norm" in Las Vegas.[14] To meet the string needs of entertainers, the Copa Room Orchestra was augmented by up to 32 instrumentalists.[15] Morelli sought to add a year-round strings section and with perseverance he succeeded. Union musician president Frank Leone stated this was "the significance of Antonio Morelli."[16]

Local musicians of the Sands' heyday in the 1950s and into the 1960s, agreed "playing at the Sands was the pinnacle of an entertainer's career," and "they all wanted to be part of the Morelli Orchestra,"[17] The orchestra leader provided stiff demands mandating that instrumentalists read music instantly or "you were out the door."[18] Nevertheless, Morelli conceded to musicians with promise, especially strings players. Bertine Corimby, a local violinist and viola player, shared her audition terror when Morelli requested a scale of perfect fifths on the Viola, for which she was unprepared to play. Nevertheless, she was inducted into the orchestra as the second viola player.[19] Corimby noted her skills improved as a result of performing with Morelli.

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[11] Ortwein, Dr.Dennis, Written Testimonial of Antonio Morelli, March 25, 2011.

[12] Deacon, Maxine, Written Testimonial on Antonio Morelli, March 2011.

[13] Frank Leone, panelist, "Morelli and His Music," Las Vegas Academy, Auditorium, April 2 2009.

[14] "Morelli," Panel Discussion.

[15] Coffer, 20.

[16] Leone, "Morelli," Panel discussion.

[17] Leone and Mulidore agreed "everyone wanted the job."

[18] Ibid.

As Morelli strove to improve the Copa Room Orchestra's level of performance, he had unpleasant exchanges with musicians resentful of his unrealistic demands who tended "not [to] like him." [20] Some musicians never forgave him. In the Coffer interview, Morelli delicately addressed this issue explaining when he first arrived, most Las Vegas musicians "were young men from the territory bands and smaller communities."[21] As the popularity of the town grew, qualified musicians from all quarters sought positions in his Strip orchestra and, by the mid 1960s, over one third of his players were "men with degrees in music" who had performed "in important orchestras around the world."[22]

The exacting standards to which Morelli held his musicians, he also held himself. As the Sands' music director, Morelli spent considerable time writing orchestra arrangements. Although headliners brought musical directors with them, Morelli would write new scores or recompose an evening's musical composition to present a better, integrated production. On occasion, the music flowed easily; at other times, he deliberated over troublesome arrangements until late at night. When an extended effort became necessary, each orchestra player might receive a new part the following day.[23] Morelli involved himself knowing it was his responsibility to ensure that quality productions were featured in the Copa Room of the Sands, known widely as "the Jewel of the Strip."[24]

Morelli is credited on a multitude of albums [25] for showroom recordings of celebrity entertainers in the Copa Room. Morelli's efforts improved entertainers' performances and as stated by Florence Henderson, Morelli made "every show seem like opening night."[26] The shows performed nightly in the Copa Room. Crowds gathered to see world-famous, celebrity headliners on the "intimate stage."[27] To avoid performance mishaps, Morelli was attuned to the disposition of his soloists and performers. Morelli shared this strategy: "When I'm conducting for a star ...I talk to him twenty minutes before the performance. I want to hear the sound of his voice. See how he feels. Has he eaten too much? Missed dinner? Any of these things can influence a performance. I want to coordinate my thinking with that of the artist; feel with him; identify with his mood."[28] In this way, the Maestro found few surprises once a performance started. Morelli had control and this was important because "when he was on stage, it was his world."[29]

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[19] Corimby,Bertine, "Morelli and His Music" 2009. Panelist Ken Hanlon attested to Bertine's exceptional talent as a violinist and viola player.

[20] Mulidore, Jimmy, "Morelli." Proctor, Cork. Oral recollection of musician's feelings. Telephone Conversation. March 12, 2011.

[21] Coffer, 20. Reddie, written testimonial.

[22] Coffer, 20-21. Reddie's written testimonial makes it clear over time Morelli regretted the clash he had with some of these men he came to respect.

[23] Coffer, 21.

[24] "Morelli," *Program*, 10.

[25] "Sands Hotel: Legends of the Copa Room" <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sands_Hotel (accessed April 10, 2011).

[26] Coffer, 21.

[27] Ken Hanlon stated that with the stage's physical shape, drinkers along the side were within close proximity of the players. Hanlon, "Morelli and His Music," Las Vegas Academy Auditorium, April 2, 2009.

Although there were many special moments for Morelli leading the Copa Room Orchestra, his most publicized occasion was in 1960 when Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr. joined Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford in Las Vegas for three weeks while filming *Ocean's Eleven*. Amazingly, this was the first time these men performed together on stage. The group entitled their Copa Room collaboration: *The Summit at the Sands*. In short order, the group would be known as the Rat Pack.

The name switch was not well received by Frank Sinatra because as it was explained in an article by the singer's younger daughter Tina, "Rat Pack" is what Lauren Bacall had dubbed the daily, visiting friends of her ailing husband, Humphrey Bogart.[30] Yet, for whatever reason, the Rat Pack name stuck and, more importantly, the notable group – in its Sands engagement and with Morelli leading the orchestra – became famous under the odd moniker.

During this time, as Helen Morelli recounted to Massini, the Rat Pack appeared nightly at the Sands. "[They] would do two shows ... and they spent the whole time playing tricks on one another."[31] The audiences were enthralled. Photographs depict a tall, smiling, elegantly mustachioed Morelli on stage in front of his orchestra, laughing at the Rat Pack's clowning and stage antics.[32] This was one of the most successful collaborations of Morelli's career and the photographs indicate his awareness that something wonderful was occurring. These images became internationally famous.

Photographs of the Rat Pack on stage show Sinatra and Morelli standing as close colleagues, however, this was not always the case. As written in the *Review Journal*'s news article "Standing Ovation," the two often "locked horns."[33] As each man had become accustomed to controlling others, personality disagreements were expected. Notably, even with Frank Sinatra, Maestro Morelli stood his ground.

Additional photographs document a multitude of celebrations and noteworthy occasions for the orchestra leader. Two instances provide examples. One occasion was the celebration of the Sands' twelfth anniversary with celebrity guest star Danny Thomas, a Copa Room favorite. A photograph depicts a beaming Thomas, Entratter, and Morelli with an elaborate cake depicting the Sands Resort as it would appear with its planned 17-story tower, joining the many multi-story Strip resorts built after 1952.[34] A second occasion is believed to have occurred in 1964[35] when President Lyndon Johnson visited Las Vegas during the final days of his election campaign against Barry Goldwater. Morelli was photographed with President Lyndon Johnson and Nevada's two prominent U.S. Senators, Howard Cannon and Alan Bible. No other individuals appeared in the formal photograph.

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Corimby, "Morelli" panel discussion.
[30] Newman, Melinda, "Tina Sinatra Laments the Loss of Her Dad Frank and the Death of Rat Pack Cool," <http://www.spinner.com> (accessed February 14, 2011).
[31] Massini, 2.
[32] Historical photograph on display in Morelli House.
[33] "Standing Ovations", *Las Vegas Review Journal*, April 2, 2009. At the "Morelli and His Music" event, Jimmy Mulidore described a few sparring incidents between Sinatra and Morelli.

An unexpected privilege for Morelli in leading the Copa Room Orchestra Orchestra was the opportunity to interact with a pillar of the East Coast musical community. In the early 1960s, Leonard Bernstein, the Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, arrived for scheduled performances at the Las Vegas Convention Center. During his visit, Morelli invited Bernstein to his home for dinner when the two apparently discussed the ill-mannered nature of the western audience. Though Bernstein was initially embarrassed and insulted that audience members were not stationary during his concerts, he chose to overlook the unintended slights. He surmised it was of greater importance to appreciate that these artistically-deprived music patrons were coming voluntarily to hear him. Morelli attested (to Coffer) that Bernstein's words regarding the West's lack of cultural exposure strongly affected him.[36] This conversation perhaps renewed Morelli's resolve to continue with his time-consuming pop concerts for the people of Las Vegas (see discussion below under Criterion B).

Besides Bernstein, others visited Morelli's home. On weekends and following performances, strip headliners, musicians, prominent locals, colleagues, and treasured friends often congregated at the Morelli House. Jimmy Mulidore admitted "the parties were truly magnificent."[37] Morelli loved inviting people to his home. He believed his dwelling defined his essence and was "one of the greatest challenges of [his] life."[38] Mozart, the poodle, greeted visitors at the door, while Helen prepared meals in the ultramodern kitchen. On these occasions, performers often gathered to rehash performances or to collaborate on musical compositions. During the day, it was not uncommon for Morelli to find an evening dinner guest playing the second hole along the fairway behind his home.[39] The Morelli House became an entertainment center for the musical icons who entertained Las Vegas.

The association of the Rat Pack with the Morelli House is by virtue of the importance of Morelli to the origin of the act. Otherwise, the connection of the house to the Rat Pack is weak, but it survives as the best surviving resource associated with this nationally-famous entertainment phenomenon.

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[34] Historic photograph on display at Morelli House. The Sands Hotel, as originally built, was a single-story resort.

[35] Alvarez, Brian. LVCVA, verified photograph archives show casino signs welcoming Lyndon Johnson to town October, 1964. March 4, 2011.

[36] Coffer, 25.

[37] Mulidore, "Morelli" panel discussion.

[38] Morelli was referring the thrill of working with his hands. Coffer, 22

[39] "Sands Hotel: Legends of the Copa Room" <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sands_Hotel (accessed April 8, 2011).

Besides the Morelli House, one other surviving resource is known to have limited association with the Rat Pack. On June 20, 1965, three members of the Rat Pack - Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr. - performed at the Kiel Opera House in St. Louis, Missouri, the only time members of the Rat Pack performed together on television. The television appearance solidified the mythic status of the Rat Pack in the popular mind, but the Copa stage was the most important place in association with the legend of the Rat Pack. The Kiel Opera House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 11, 2000. Its association with the Rat Pack is limited because only three members performed there and only on one occasion, but the resource has significance because of its association with the only televised performance of the Rat Pack, albeit with only part of the group. The performances at the Sands and in association with Morelli was seminal and therefore of greater importance. Unfortunately, the Sands was demolished, leaving the Morelli House as a unique survivor of this Las Vegas story, which quickly attained national significance.

In 1987, the *Las Vegas Sun* publisher, Hank Greenspun, fervently proclaimed that the Sands was the "resort that made Las Vegas famous."[40] Although earlier casinos opened along the Strip and established the corridor as a center of gaming and entertainment, the opening of the Sands on December 15, 1952 occurred when the city began an unprecedented period of visitor and Strip construction growth. The impressive list of hotels on the Strip during these glory days is as follows: Dunes (1955), Riviera (1955), Hacienda (1956), Tropicana (1957), Stardust (1958), Castaways (1963), Caesars (1966), Aladdin (1966), Circus Circus (1968) and the off strip hotels, Landmark (1969) and International (1969), which was renamed Hilton Hotel in 1971. Of the key hotels built from 1946 to 1971, only the Sahara, the Riviera, the Tropicana, Caesars, Circus Circus, and the Hilton remain, and several of these are likely to be demolished in the near future.[41]

The Sands' domination of the Strip could not last. As Las Vegas Boulevard and its magnificent hotels began to thrive, visitors and headliners explored new venues. It was no doubt hurtful to both Entratter and Morelli when for example, Dean Martin, who was given a minority shareholder's interest, contracted at the Riviera or when Frank Sinatra contracted with Caesars Palace.[42] Nonetheless, with significant casino and city advances within a short period of time, both Entratter and Morelli were instrumental in the growing stature and popularity of the Las Vegas Strip worldwide.

Criterion B

Antonio Morelli, was born July 22, 1904 in Rochester, New York, spending his youth in Erie, Pennsylvania. His father, Cesare Carlos Morelli, a professor of fine arts and a symphony flautist provided the young Morelli early training in violin and piano. In 1914, Morelli's father took him to Italy where he would remain for 11 years to pursue studies at Milan's San Celso Military Academy and the Royal Conservatories of Music in Milan and Parma.[43] Morelli returned to the States in 1925 before his 21st birthday and became the pianist for a concert group at a hotel resort on the East Coast. Morelli spent the next years travelling to Dallas, Denver, New Orleans, Chicago, and New York to conduct theater and civic orchestras. For two seasons, he served as musical director of the St. Louis Musical Opera. In 1935, while assisting as orchestra leader for the newly opened RKO Palace Theater in Albany, New York, he married Helen Collins. Morelli continued to "travel the entertainment circuit...guest conducting for the pit orchestras at Warner, Paramount, RKO, Pantages, Shubert and other theater chains when stage shows still accompanied the movie feature."[44] In the Coffer interview, Morelli noted the musicals he conducted for the Shuberts: "*High Button Shoes*, with Eddie Foy; *Spring in Brazil*, with Milton Berle; *Three to Make Ready*, with Ray Bolger. *Touch and Go*; Victor Herbert's *Eileen*; Friml's *Vagabond King*; *Bohemian Girl*; and many others..."[45] He enjoyed his life because there was "nothing like the excitement of a Broadway opening."[46]

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[40] Greenspun, Hank, editor's column, *Las Vegas Sun*, 1987, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/history, (accessed March 20, 2011).

[41] History, Las Vegas. Casino map. *Las Vegas Sun.* <http://lasvegassun.com/history, (accessed March 15, 2011). Thanks to Michael Green for assistance with this material.

[42] Ken Hanlon, telephone conversation with Sally Rycroft, March 8, 2011.

Despite the excitement of life, life itself was painful for Morelli. Morelli lived with back pain, arthritis, and bursitis; the searing pain of these afflictions frequently left him bedridden. On one occasion he underwent major surgery, which, as he told Coffer, confined him to his home for forty weeks. Morelli used the time to compose music: "This period encompassed some of the major accomplishments of his career, including such commissions as writing the music for three shows at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto in association with Leon Leonidoff, senior producer at Radio City Music Hall."[47] He was able to do what he loved while his body recovered. During this time, Morelli adopted his trademark look, which would make him famous in Las Vegas: the courtly mustache with waxed pencil-tip endpoints. As Morelli shaped his career, he also shaped his identity.

Morelli's captivation with Las Vegas was remarkable given his first encounter in the desert. In 1953, Morelli traveled to Southern Nevada with the Olsen and Johnson comedy team. During their Vegas stopover, the blowing winds aggravated his allergies and caused severe discomfort.[48] Morelli became aware of the tribulations of arid living, and was relieved to return to New York City. However, this was not to be his last trip to Nevada. Following discussions at the Copacabana Club, Jack Entratter, president of the Sands Hotel, offered Morelli the resort's coveted musical director's position. For the classical conductor, the plum of this flattering proposal was the Copa Room Orchestra.[49]

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[43] Hess, House Essay, 2.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 21.
[47] Coffer, 22,16; "Morelli and His Music," *Program*, Junior League of Las Vegas, Las Vegas Academy Auditorium, April 2, 2009, 3.
[48] Hess, Alan, "A New Architecture for a New City." *The Morelli House*. Junior League of Las Vegas,3. Coffer, Helene L., "Antonio Morelli: From Broadway to Las Vegas," *Sage*, Summer, 1967,22.
[49] Hess,3.

Despite his earlier desert experience, Morelli tentatively accepted Entratter's proposal and in the summer of 1954, he flew to Las Vegas to explore the feasibility of employment. As Morelli disembarked the airplane, he was greeted by the unrelenting 117 degree summer heat. Morelli discovered the dry heat alleviated his constant arthritic pain. He was thrilled and in a telephone conversation with Helen, proclaimed he never felt better. Miraculously, the desert provided a respite from the soreness of his joints.[50] The health benefits alone were reason to relocate to Las Vegas. Entratter and other casino operators were delighted Morelli would consider their offer, as they believed the Strip's economic growth required attracting the Eastern elite and a high-end audience.[51] The casino operators believed Morelli's elegant presence and polished manner on the Copa Room stage would counter negative rumors about Las Vegas and would entice wealthy, educated tourists. As Hess asserted in his article, "Morelli truly represented a new icon for the city: a man very unlike the rougher, gangster type figures popularly portrayed as making up Old Vegas"[52] Bill Reddie, a longtime Las Vegas composer and musician, who would ultimately succeed Morelli as the Sands' music director, commented on the Maestro's appearance when he arrived in the city: "With his waxed moustache, wavy white hair and authoritative demeanor, (Morelli) gave one the impression of someone who had been lifted out of the 19th century and somehow plunked down in Las Vegas.[53]

Though Morelli's distinguished look and impeccable credentials were in order, the casino operators' confidence in his innate ability to draw a wealthy crowd was tenuous. It would not be easy to offset the perception that crime syndicates managed many of the seven "luxury" motor inns - the Sahara, El Rancho, Thunderbird, New Frontier, Desert Inn, Sands, and the Flamingo – along Fifth Street (aka Las Vegas Blvd or "the Strip").[54] Furthermore, Las Vegas was perceived as a hot, dusty, crude and garish community, only acceptable for the downtown's country western crowd. There remained the question if such unpleasant characteristics would be tolerable to the Strip's potential market back East. Even Helen, who ultimately embraced the desert lifestyle, offered critical reflections about the early community. She described the Strip as a wild, two-lane, not totally paved, roadway lacking lights and signals. She was also stunned that each casino had its own "sewer plant" culminating in foul smells all over the city when "the wind [blew]... the wrong way."[55] The desert city's rough lifestyle mixed with touches of glamour and glitter, perhaps burdening it with what Hess referred to as an "unflattering *nouveau rich* perception."[56] To lure people westward, Morelli needed magic in his conductor's baton. In hindsight, Morelli's career was indeed magical.

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[50] Massini, Jerry, written copy of oral interview of Helen Morelli,52 Country Club Lane, Desert Inn Estates, Las Vegas, NV. March 6, 1976,1.

[51] Panel discussion at "Morelli and His Music" noted the downtown casinos drew in a more country western crowd and the Strip moved to attract the wealthy nightclub types and Eastern audience. Copa Room was named after the Copacabana Club.

[52] Hess, 4.

[53] Reddie, Bill, email testimonial on Antonio Morelli. March 13, 2009

[54] "History - Las Vegas," *Las Vegas Sun*. <http//www.lasvegassun.com/history> (accessed Mar 2, 2011).

[55] Massini, 5.

[56] Hess, "Architecture", 3.

Morelli House
Name of Property
Clark County
County and State
NA
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Bibliography Page 1

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Morelli House
Name of Property
Clark County
County and State
NA
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1979 *Vienna to Los Angeles: Two Journeys*. Arts + Architecture Press, Santa Monica.

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Cork Proctor, telephone conversation, March 12, 2011.

Panel Discussion and Program

2009 "Morelli and His Music" Junior League of Las Vegas, Las Vegas Academy Auditorium, Las Vegas, NV. April 2, 2009.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .51 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	667482	4003867	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The National Register boundaries for the Morelli House include the .51-acre parcel identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 139-34-701-002, Clark County, Nevada.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The National Register boundaries for the Morelli House conform to the parcel on which the house is sited.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Junior League of Las Vegas together with Ronald James and Sara Fogelquist, NV SHPO
organization
date September 20, 2011
street & number 861 East Bridger Avenue
telephone 702-822-6536
city or town Las Vegas
state Nevada
zip code 89101
e-mail

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See Continuation Sheet.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Junior League of Las Vegas

street & number 861 East Bridger Avenue telephone 702-822-6536

city or town Las Vegas state zip code 89101

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Exterior, front façade, looking north.
Number: 0001
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0001

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Exterior, front façade, looking north.
Number: 0002
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0002

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, foyer with partition.
Number: 0003
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0003

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, living room.
Number: 0004
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0004

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, living room and dining room.
Number: 0005
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0005

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, dining room with partition.
Number: 0006
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0006

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, breakfast nook.
Number: 0007
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0007

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, kitchen.
Number: 0008
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0008

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, kitchen, looking into foyer and dining room.
Number: 0009
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0009

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, master bathroom.
(Recent repairs to damaged tile not reflected in photograph.)
Number: 0010
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0010

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, master bathroom faucet with "AM" monogram.
Number: 0011
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0011

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Interior, guest bathroom.
Number: 0012
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0012

Additional Images

Antonio Morelli
Unknown date
NV_Clark_Morelli House_1

Senator Alan Bible, Antonio Morelli, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Senator Howard Canon
1964
NV_Clark_Morelli House_2

Antonio Morelli and the Copa Room Orchestra
Unknown date
NV_Clark_Morelli House_3

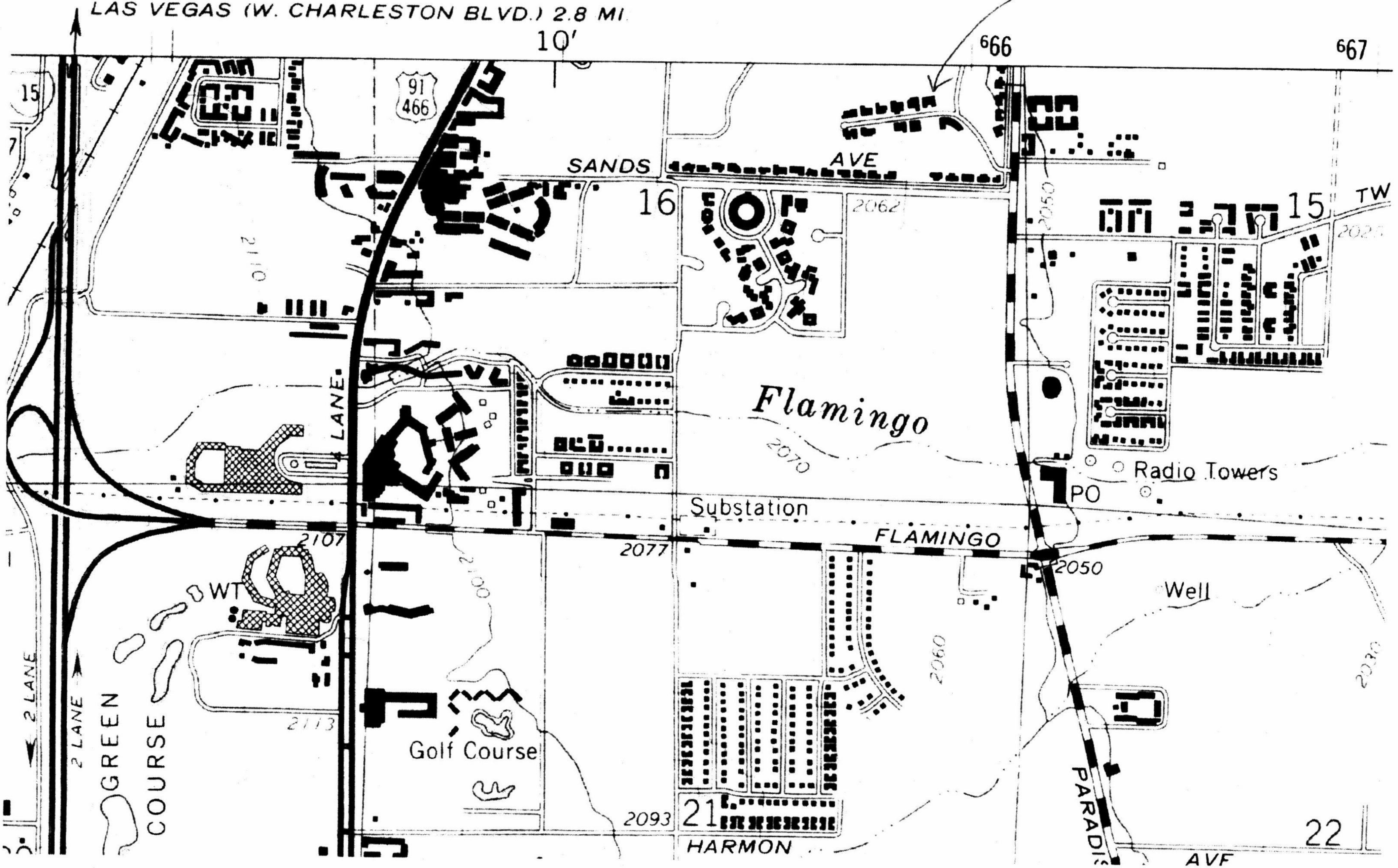
Jack Entratter, Danny Thomas, Antonio Morelli at the 12th Anniversary of the Sands
1964
NV_Clark_Morelli House_4

Dean Martin, Antonio Morelli, Frank Sinatra
1960s
NV_Clark_Morelli House_5

Don Rickles, George Burns, Mr. and Mrs. Nat King Cole, Carlos Gastel, Antonio Morelli
1960s
NV_Clark_Morelli House_6

1967 LAS VEGAS

MORELLI HS.?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Radio Towers
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FLAMINGO
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2 LANE
GREEN
COURSE
2113
Golf Course
PARADIS
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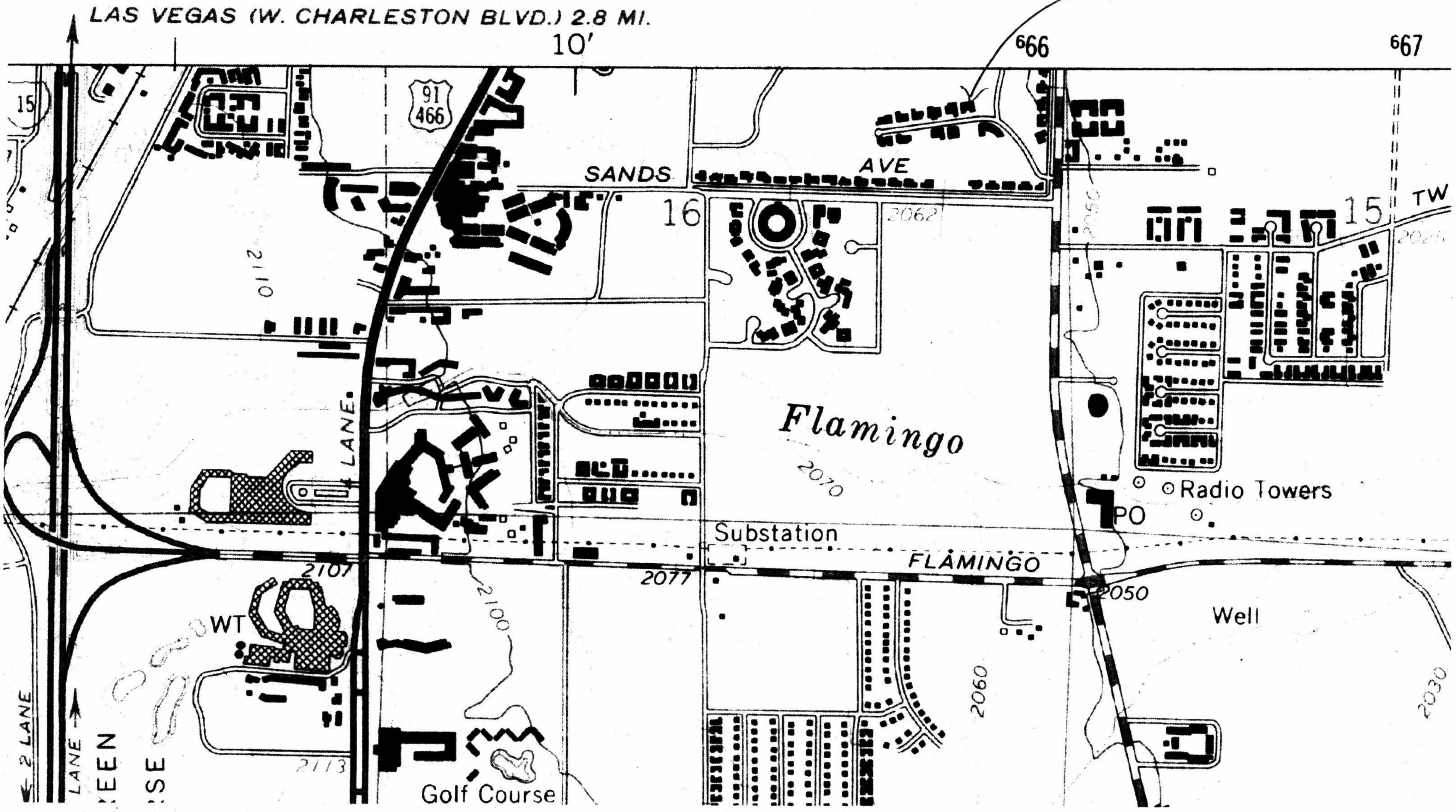
HARMON
AVE
22

1977 LAS VEGAS



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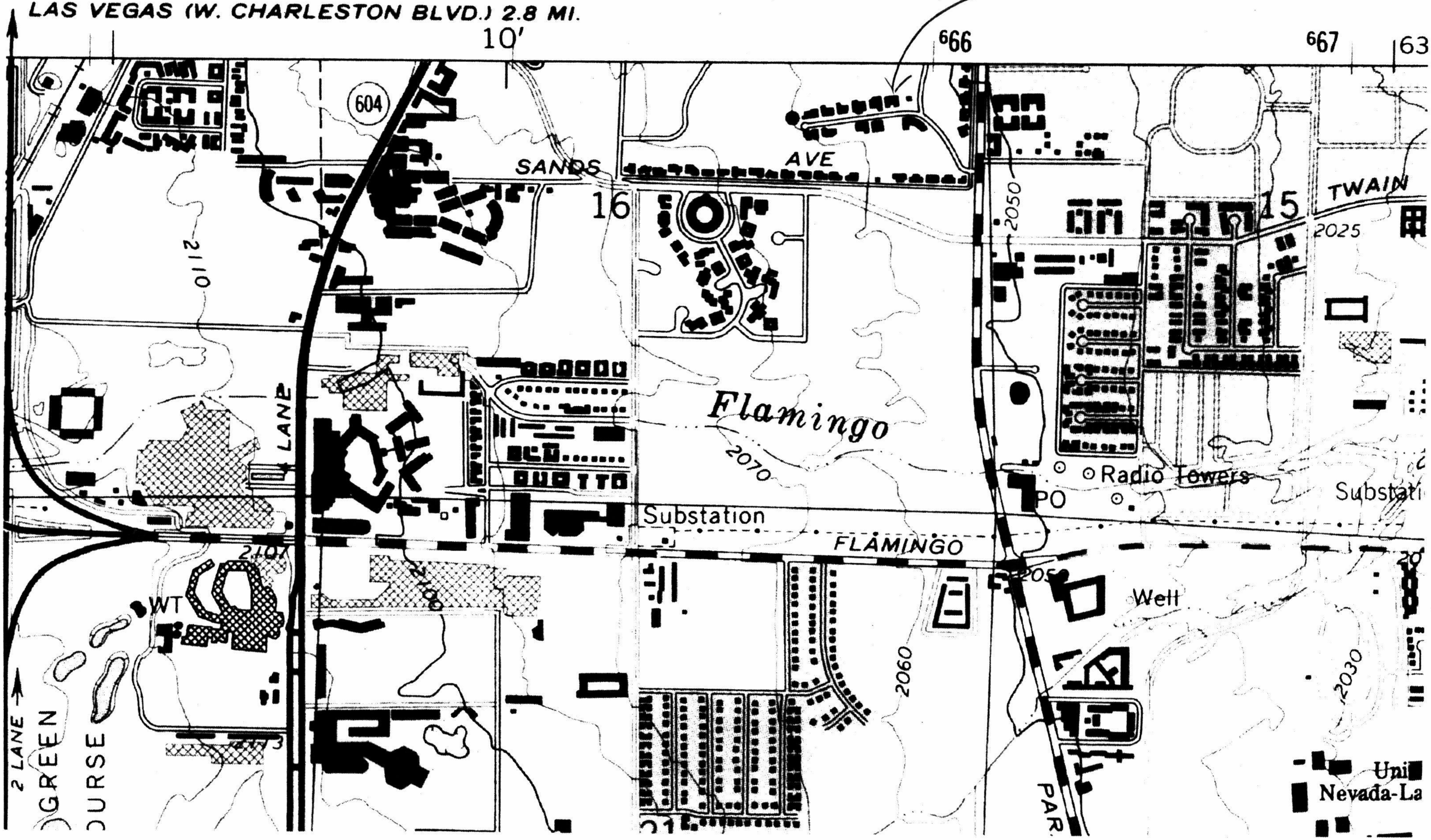
MORELLI HS?



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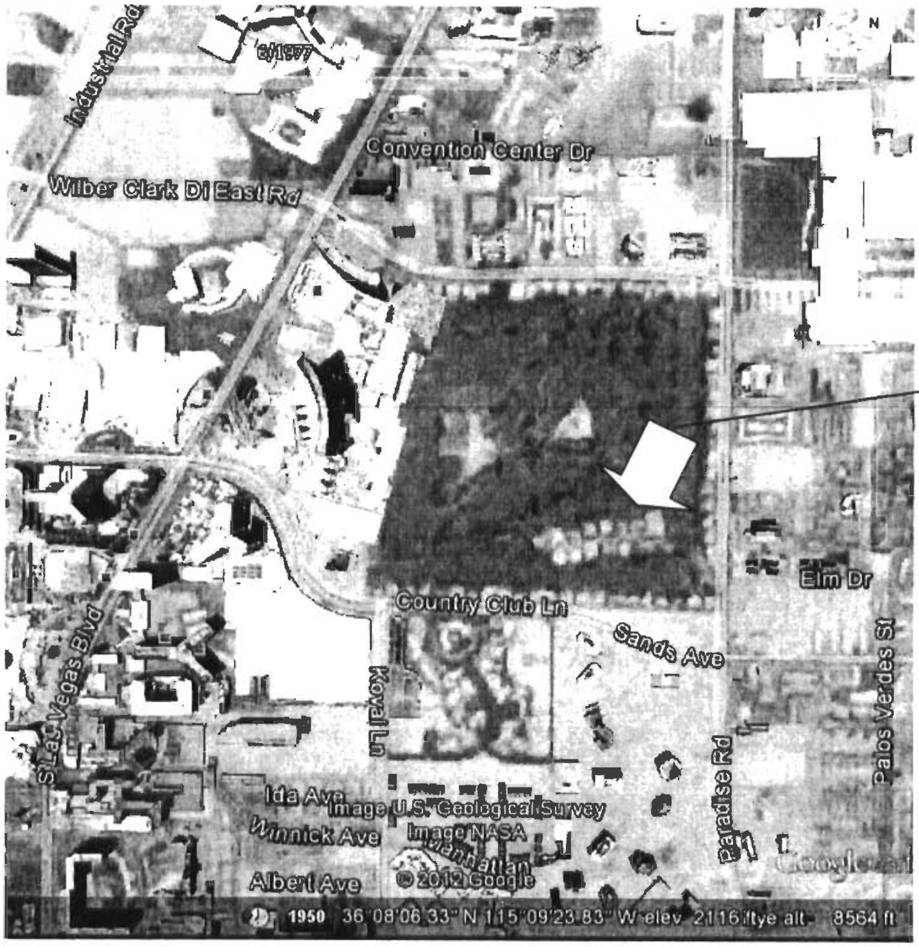
N
6/1977
Industrial Rd
Convention Center Dr
Wilber Clark Di East Rd
Elm Dr
Country Club Ln
Sands Ave
Koval Ln
S Las Vegas Blvd
Paradise Rd
Palos Verdes St
Ida Ave
Winnick Ave
Albert Ave
Manhattan
Image U.S. Geological Survey
Image NASA
© 2012 Google
Google earth
1950 36°08'06.33" N 115°09'23.83" W elev 2116 ft eye alt 8564 ft

Possible location of Morelli House

Desert Inn Golf Course and subdivision in 1977, showing Country Club Drive above Country Club Lane in the southeast corner. (Google Earth)

1965 PHOTO
LAS VEGAS

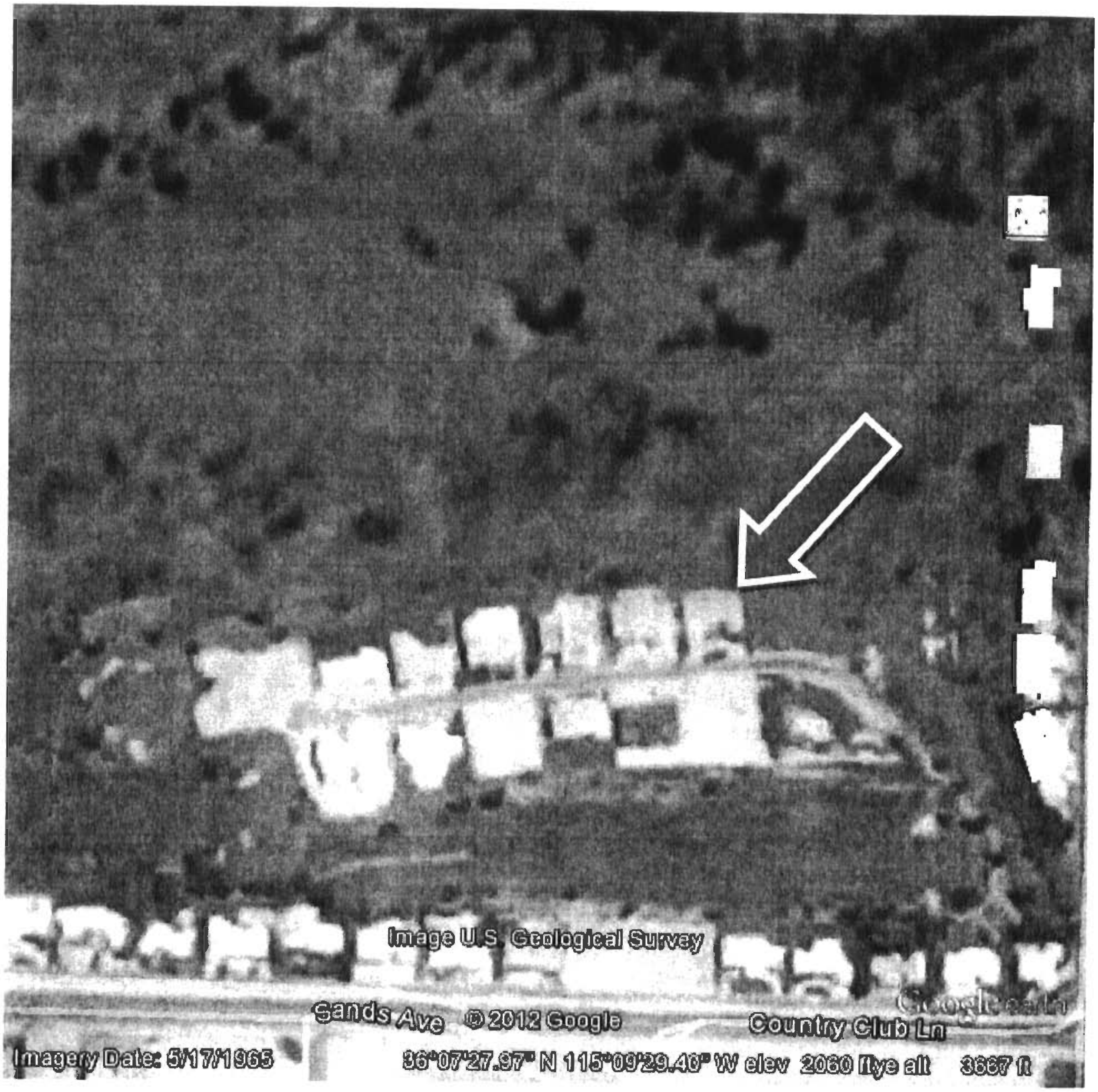
Image U.S. Geological Survey
Sands Ave
© 2012 Google
Country Club Ln
Google earth
Imagery Date: 5/17/1965
36°07'27.97" N 115°09'29.40" W elev 2060 ft eye alt 3687 ft

Morelli House, 52 Country Club Drive, Las Vegas, NV, 1977
North side of road, last house on east. (Google Earth)

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

RECEIVED 2280

DEC 23 2011

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1086

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Morelli House

other names/site number 52 Country Club Drive

2. Location

street & number 861 East Bridger Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Las Vegas ☐ vicinity

state Nevada code ____ county Clark code 03 zip code 89101-5539

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide _X_ local

, SHPO 14 December 2011

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) ____________

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Morelli House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Clark

DATE RECEIVED:	12/23/11	DATE OF PENDING LIST:	1/19/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY:	2/03/12	DATE OF 45TH DAY:	2/07/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:			

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11001086

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	Y	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	Y	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT X RETURN ___REJECT 2-6-12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attached

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER Barbara Wyatt DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE 202-354-2252 DATE 2-6-12

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Recommendation:__**SLR**__**Return** **Action:**___**SLR**__**Return**___**None**

Documentation Issues–Discussion Sheet

State Name: NV **County Name** Clark **Resource Name** Morelli House

Reference No. 11000086 **Multiple Name**

Solution:

Problem: Substantive: Moved to a much different setting (to be saved)
However, this is Vegas

Technical Significant Person lised, Appl Crit B not checked

Perhaps this one is Meeting Material

Resolution:

SLR: Yes No

Database Change:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Comments
Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: Morelli House

Property Location: Las Vegas, Nevada

Reference Number: 11001086

Date of Return: 2-7-12

Reason for Return
This nomination is being returned for additional information, because of questions about the application of Criterion C, the integrity of the property, and certain omissions. Specific comments about the nomination follow.

Background
The house was built in 1959 in the Desert Inn Estates subdivision, where it overlooked the Desert Inn Golf Course. The subdivision was developed on a parcel of land bordered by Country Club Lane, Paradise Road, Wilber Clark Di East Road (or East Desert Inn Road), and Koval Lane. Country Club Drive seems to have entered the development near the south boundary, from the east off of Paradise Road. Fifteen lots were created on these "interior" parcels as "Desert Inn Estates 2."

The Morelli House appears to have been the easternmost house on the north side Country Club Drive, overlooking the golf course from the south. The nomination indicates the swimming pool was sited at the front of the house, allowing for an unobstructed view of the golf course from the rear elevation. The nomination claims that the "view through the living room's expansive glass windows blurred the distinction between indoors and outdoors" (p. 7-5). The house was designed to take full advantage of the view toward the second fairway.

The proposed construction of the bigger Wynn Country Club on the site of the Desert Inn Golf Course and subdivision resulted in the removal of all houses on Country Club Drive. The Junior League of Las Vegas decided to move and restore the Morelli House in 2001, because of its excellent Modern design and because the move was feasible due to certain practical considerations. The Morelli House seems to have been the only house on Country Club Drive to have been saved. It was moved to 861 East Bridger Avenue in Las Vegas.

Points to Reconsider

1. The Morelli House is a good example of Modern architecture in Las Vegas, nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion C. However, the loss of integrity due to its greatly altered setting and its move from the site that dictated its design compromises its eligibility in terms of this criterion. Eligibility under criteria A and B, however, may be justifiable. Please follow the guidance provided in the National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* and construct an eligibility statement based on A, B, or both, as appropriate.

2. Even with the application of criteria A and B, questions regarding integrity must be addressed. The nomination is frank in stating that the house "suffers a loss of integrity having been relocated from its original location" (p. 7-5). The East Bridger Avenue location is adjacent to two National Register properties, the Las Vegas High School (built in 1931) and the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District, which encompasses houses of roughly the same period as the high school. The Morelli House is the only Mid-Century Modern house in the vicinity of the historic district, according to the nomination, but it is considered to complement other historic buildings in the district (p. 7-7). This site "harmonized with the history of the Morelli House," according to the nomination (p. 7-5), because of the high school's emphasis on performing and visual arts. Antonio Morelli was a nationally known band leader who promoted education in the arts (p. 7-7). This point seems speculative, but if it can be documented that Mr. Morelli directly influenced this school, please explain. Otherwise, this argument should be dropped or minimized. However, Morelli's significance as a band leader should be emphasized if Criterion B is applied. It must be demonstrated that this house best represents his years of achievement for B to apply. The significance of the Morelli years in the house in terms of Las Vegas history, particularly the entertainment history, should be demonstrated for Criterion A to apply.

3. Describe how the new site preserves the integrity of the building, even though it is much different from the original site. On Country Club Drive the Morelli house was adjacent to other houses on roughly quarter acre lots, creating a partially suburban setting. This point may be relevant. A circular drive now dominates the narrow front yard. Aerial photos show similar drives at some houses in the original neighborhood.

4. Describe how the loss of views and vistas has been accommodated at the new site. The particularly important view from the back, over the second fairway, has been replaced with a view of a parking lot and a multi-story apartment building. The nomination claims that "at its new location at 861 East Bridger Avenue, the rear façade faces the new site's northern perimeter. The Morelli House again blends with its environment" (p. 7-5). However, blending with any environment was not the design strategy; capturing the golf course view was pivotal. You might explain how landscaping in the back yard provides a natural vista or screen from the back of the house. Given current codes regarding lawns and plantings in Las

Vegas, it may not be a verdant view, but perhaps it serves to minimize the nearby construction.

5. Describe how the integrity of the house is adequate, even though parts of the original house and site features could not be moved or replicated and a new wing seems to have been added. There seems to be an addition on the east side that is not described in the nomination. Please explain if this wing was constructed after the house was moved to East Bridger Avenue or if it is part of the original house. What is the year of construction for the wing? Please send a photograph of this elevation and other elevations. Only a portion of the front elevation was submitted; views of the sides and back and a full view of the front were not submitted.

The Morelli House may be eligible for the National Register, but the nomination needs to be modified and strengthened, as described above, to convey its eligibility. Please call me at 202-354-2252 if you have any questions.

Barbara Wyatt, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
202-354-2252

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

RECEIVED 2280

APR 17 2012

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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1. Name of Property

historic name Morelli House

other names/site number 52 Country Club Drive

2. Location

street & number 861 East Bridger Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Las Vegas ☐ vicinity

state Nevada code ___ county Clark code ___ zip code 89101-5539

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national **___ statewide** **X local**

Ronald M. James, SHPO 4-13-2012

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

by Barbara Wyatt 6-3-12

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

☒ private
☐ public - Local
☐ public - State
☐ public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/SINGLE DWELLING

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: STUCCO, WOOD, CONCRETE BLOCK

roof: TROPICOOL (CRUSHED ROCK)
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See Continuation Sheet.

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheet.

DESCRIPTION

In 1959, Antonio and Helen Morelli built their home at 52 Country Club Drive within the confines of the prestigious Desert Inn Estates, overlooking the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. In 2001, to save the home from demolition, a fate that befell the other homes within the Estates, the Morelli House was relocated to a parcel at Ninth Street and Bridger Avenue. At its new location, the Morelli House is owned and operated by the Junior League of Las Vegas, which faithfully maintains the 1959 appearance of the home while rehabilitating it as an office, event space, and history museum and gallery.

The 1959 "dream house" began with careful planning in 1958. Morelli collaborated with Richard Small, a carpenter foreman and colleague at the Sands, to design the new home. Finally, with the design established, Morelli retained Las Vegas architect, Hugh E. Taylor, to draw the plans. Morelli and Small dedicated two years to planning and constructing the modern residence. Thoughtful preparations and attention to detail distinguished the home from others in the Estates. The rear façade faced north, overlooking the golf course and its sprawling lawns. While other swimming pools in the Estates were in the backyards, the Morelli pool was placed strategically in the front yard, hidden from the street by a cement-block wall and tropical plantings. Where the neighbors' backyard view of the golf course was obstructed with swimming pools, the Morelli backyard presented an unobstructed view. From the golf course, the Morelli House appeared unified with the landscape.

The resulting home was ultra-modern for its day and in a sense continues to defy architectural classification. In some regards, the Morelli House fits architects McAlester and McAlester's "Contemporary" subtype. The flat-roofed subtype of Contemporary is a derivative of the earlier International style, referred to as American International.[1] The house meets the design intent of Populuxe, which according to author Thomas Hine includes qualities as "fun, fashionable, fantastic, and futuristic."[2] According to National Register Bulletin 16A, modern movement styles might be classified as International Style, Miesian, New-formalism, Brutalism, Neo-expressionism, or Ranch style. However, none of these descriptions are exclusively applicable. It is known from individuals employed in the construction of the house that the Morellis were influenced by R. M. Schindler, who built modernist houses in southern California, and by Philip Johnson, who built the Glass House (listed as a National Historic Landmark, 1997) in New Canaan, Connecticut, Helen Morelli's home town. Drawing upon the influences of the first half of the twentieth century, the term to best describe the Morelli House is simply "Modern." Not that "Modern" is all that simple, drawing on diverse and often drastic responses, from American and European, to a new age.

Despite relocation, the Morelli House retains its original massing and fenestration. Essentially rectangular in plan, the overall appearance of the Morelli House is long and low, blending into the landscape. The flat roof is covered with crushed white rock. The architectural plans identify the tar-and-gravel roof as "Tropicool with 2 inch gravel surface." It is assumed that Tropicool is a trade name, although conclusive evidence has not been found. The crushed rock glitters in the sunlight. The roof compliments the Modern styling of the house and provides reduced surface temperature. The widely-overhanging eaves are supported by exposed redwood beams. Natural stain provides contrast against the pale gray of the walls and the white of the rock roof. The wall surface is stucco as well as painted redwood with vertical battens, which counteract the structure's extreme horizontality. In several places along the front approach of the house, walls are screened with decorative open-work cement blocks. A row of windows top the screens. Between the top of the screen and the eaves, is an area identified as a gallery by the architect. The decorative cement block screens have been appropriately reconstructed following the relocation and complete the front façade.

---

[1] Lee McAlester and Virginia McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) 482.
[2] Thomas Hine. *Populuxe*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 38.

The wall of the rear façade consists of vertical wood on the outside of the kitchen and a small ell, which contains the master bedroom and extends a few feet past the rear wall. Between the bedroom and the kitchen is a bank of floor-to-ceiling glass panels, including a sliding glass door, which create the living room wall. A concrete patio extends the length of the rear elevation and is covered partially by broad eaves. The patio replicates the footprint of patio at the original site. Four futuristic metal light fixtures hang from the beams, with smaller matching sconces attached to the metal framework of the windows. The windows and doors are set into aluminum frames and are either fixed or sliders. The exterior doors feature full glass panels, with the exception of the redwood double entry doors.

The double entry doors, painted "robin's egg blue" open to the foyer, which is separated from the living and dining room by a redwood paneled partition designed to conceal a coat closet on the entry side and to reveal china and collectibles on the dining side. The foyer retains the original 1959 feeling and appearance. The original vinyl composition tile remains with a Greek-key design in the corners. Morelli's careful details in the foyer continue throughout the house.

Flanking the double entry doors in the foyer are panels of colored art glass with a roughly corrugated "raindrop" or "teardrop" texture. Above the doors, a leaded-glass panel situates the Morelli House within the history of Las Vegas. The panel was created by local artist Isabel Piczel who also designed the windows for the Mid-Century Modern Guardian Angel Cathedral of Las Vegas, which was constructed in 1963. The stunning panel was given to the Morellis in recognition of their volunteerism and support of the Catholic Church community, including commissioning the windows for the Cathedral. The artwork and its symbolism of generosity define the entrance of the home.

Adjacent to the foyer is the kitchen, complete with breakfast nook and utility area. The clean lines and efficient use of space define the modern kitchen. The original appliances include an antique-copper colored oven, stove with hood, and refrigerator. Other original features include a "bun warmer" drawer, two corner "Lazy-Susan" cabinets, a special cabinet for a Mixmaster, and an enclosed storage area behind the sink. A large built-in island faced with pleated upholstery, echoes an era of stylish Las Vegas lounges. Large, frosted egg-shaped light fixtures hang from the wood plank ceiling. Conical down-lights with small perforated holes add sparkle to the kitchen.

For the Morelli's, the kitchen's breakfast nook was central to the home, providing a convenient place to gather. For Antonio, the nook became a functional place to work on music. For Helen, however, who loved to cook and entertain, this arrangement likely would not last. In the early 1960s, a portion of the breeze-way was enclosed as Antonio's music studio. In 2001, the concrete pad foundation, on which the music studio addition was constructed, prevented the studio from being relocated.

The breakfast nook retains the original look and feeling of 1959. On the west wall, a custom-designed television cabinet swings to reveal a fully equipped bar for entertaining. Following Morelli's decorative style, memorabilia is displayed on the shelves above the table. Photographs from the 1950s and 1960s depict the house, as well as the guests who frequented it, including Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr.

Adjacent to the kitchen is the utility area. A partition between the kitchen and utility area allows light from the clerestory windows to reach the kitchen and family room. The Morellis later converted a half-bathroom in the utility area into a laundry room. The space was innovative, with a wall of double-sided redwood storage cabinetry, a steel utility sink, and a combination washer-dryer. In 2007, the Junior League eliminated the laundry area to restore the bathroom. The original linoleum flooring remains with white streaks against an orange background set in a grid of blue-green stripes.[3]

The kitchen leads to the dining room, with an original, low cabinet-partition dividing the foyer from the dining room to provide storage on either side. The dining room extends to the living room, a showcase of Mid-Century Modern design. Unpainted redwood beams span front to rear of the house, complete with indirect cove lighting and soffits. A prominent feature in the living room is the fireplace with a raised "floating" marble-topped hearth and a massive, hammered-copper hood. The Morellis considered the home's north elevation to be the primary façade. Here, floor-to-ceiling glass panels, a section of which includes a sliding-glass door, create the north wall of the living room. Draperies cover the glass wall and operate electronically to "tuck into" a panel next to the fireplace. The living room emphasizes natural materials with Philippine mahogany wall paneling, copper fireplace hood, and expansive glass exposing the landscape. The living and dining rooms exemplify the Mid-Century Modern ideals of beauty in natural materials and harmony in space-defining planes.

Since Morelli's furnishings were long absent, selecting new furnishings in the living and dining room to complement the home's architectural integrity presented a challenge. Vladimir Kagan, regarded as the "grandfather of modern furniture design," provided design consultation for the furnishings and collaborated with his manufacturers to donate pieces. The cubist dining room set, the grey Nautilus sofa and the royal blue tri-symmetric foot stool in the living room are from Kagan's personal, private collection. His designs are also evident in the living room's burgundy serpentine sofas and ottomans as well as the cocktail table and barrel chairs.[4] Kagan's iconic furniture compliments the architectural style of the home and the features of the living room and dining room. Beyond the living and dining rooms are the bedrooms, identified in the plans as the master bedroom and the guest room. The master bedroom, down a short hallway from the guest bathroom, exhibits Mid-Century Modern architectural features. The high ceilings are modulated by dropped soffits and beams, which repeat those in the living room. Originally, the bed was located on the west wall. The innovative light and security controls for the house remain on each side of where the bed was located.

---

[3] Dr. Robert Fielden, a prominent architect in Las Vegas, and Alan Hess, a well-known preservationist and writer specializing in Mid-Century Modern architecture, confirm that the use of such colorful, modern manufactured materials and patterns is in keeping with the period: Fielden, interview; Hess, 18.

The master bedroom includes separate dressing rooms; Helen's with built-in three-way mirrors, drawers and closets and Antonio's with a mirrored cabinet for his ties, are typical of well-planned storage in a Mid-Century Modern home. The dressing rooms lead to the master bathroom, a "primary space," restored to former luxury. The bath, with a sunken custom-tiled-shower and an elevated sink, accommodated Antonio's tall frame. Dual sinks, colored plumbing fixtures, a step-down open shower, and Antonio's monogram "AM" on the faucets highlight the space. In the mirror over the dual sinks is the original and still operable modernistic clock. Custom turquoise gold-flecked ceramic tiles cover the sinks and the shower. During the move, a few of the shower tiles were damaged beyond repair. Since additional, original tiles were no longer available, the Junior League replaced the damaged tiles with harmoniously contrasting tiles rather than replicating the original tiles. The separate dressing rooms and bathroom retain their original feeling and appearance.

Opposite the master bedroom is the spacious guest bedroom with an elegantly-appointed connecting bath with custom tile. Decorated by the Morellis, the original yellow wallpaper, yellow tile and bathroom fixtures remain. The workmanship around the tile sinks and the detailed floor evidence the care of the architect and builder. The faucets in the sink exhibit Morelli's signature monogram. The guest bedroom and bathroom complete the interior of the home.

From planning the front approach of the home to monogramming the bathroom faucets, Antonio Morelli scrutinized every detail of the home. One detail would distinguish the Morelli House from all other homes within the Desert Inn Country Club Estates, namely, a crawl space. With the exception of the Morelli House, the other homes were constructed on a concrete foundation. The detail of a crawl space allowed the Morelli House to be saved from demolition and moved to a new location. The reason for moving the structure far exceeded the practical aspect of its having a crawl space, however: The Junior League in consultation with preservationists selected the Morelli House as the most significant expression of period design.

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[4] Kagan is an internationally-known designer. His furniture is in the permanent collections of many museums including the Albert Museum in London, the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York and the San Francisco Museum of Modern. The World Market Center honored him with their Design Icon Award in January of 2007. Interviews with Sherry Colquitt and Dedee Nave.

At its original location at 52 Country Club Drive, the rear façade faced north, overlooking the golf course and its sprawling verdant lawns. The view through the living room's expansive glass windows blurred the distinction between indoors and outdoors. At its new location at 861 East Bridger Avenue, the rear façade faces the new site's northern perimeter. The Morelli House again blends with its environment. The "desert landscape" mandated by the local government compliments the home's pale grey exterior walls, exposed redwood beams, and Edward Durell Stone style decorative open-work cement screen. The latter feature is similar to that used by Stone at his celebrated 1958 American Embassy in New Delhi. Although the original cement screen was destroyed, an appropriate new screen replicates the original. The screens are topped by clerestory windows through which one can see the beams extending from the exterior into the interior of the house. The Morelli house is an excellent early example of Modern architecture in Las Vegas and is important to understanding the architectural history and the development of the area.

Integrity

The Morelli house suffers a loss of integrity having been relocated from its original location. In its new location, the house sits adjacent to the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991) and across from the Las Vegas High School (individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996). Since 1993 the Las Vegas High School has served the greater Clark County area as the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing and Visual Arts, and thus harmonizes with the history of the Morelli House.

The interior and exterior of the home retain the highest degree of integrity. The primary spaces, including the exterior, entrance, foyer, kitchen-breakfast nook, dining room, living room and the guest and master bathrooms, have been restored to their original state under the *Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitation*. The secondary spaces, including the master and guest bedrooms, have been rehabilitated for office purposes. Even as offices, the open rooms retain the original sense of space.[5]

The integrity of the Morelli House has been faithfully maintained throughout the decades. In 1979, following Antonio's death and Helen's subsequent relocation to the East,[6] Kay G. Glenn, Howard Hughes' press secretary, purchased the Morelli's home. For over twenty years, Glenn meticulously maintained the home and property.[7]

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[5] Dr. Janet White of UNLV's Department of Architecture evaluated the architectural significance of the Morelli House to the City of Las Vegas.

[6] Helen moved back East in 1979, five years after her husband's death. In an oral interview with Jerry Massini, 1976, she stated she had hoped to remain in Las Vegas until her death, but she was forced to move due to ill health.

[7] Carole Cosgrove Terry. *The Morelli House – Rescued and Restored. 2010, 7.*

In 2000, Steve Wynn purchased the Desert Inn Resort and approximately 30 lots within the Desert Inn Estates.[8] Wynn proceeded to acquire the remaining lots in the Desert Inn Estates in preparation for new development. Plans for the new Wynn Megaresort along the famed Las Vegas Boulevard necessitated demolition of the Desert Inn Resort and all structures located in the Desert Inn Estates, including the Morelli House.[9] This monumental land acquisition bordered by the Las Vegas Boulevard, Paradise Road, and Twain Avenue jeopardized many Mid-Century Modern homes. Wynn's negotiators, members of the Molasky Group, including the elder Molasky, who in 1952 developed the original community, presented offers well-above appraised value to the estate homeowners. Some homeowners willingly accepted the agreement price and provisions, while others delayed acceptance for up to four years with protracted courtroom disputes.[10]

In the midst of the contractual dealings with the homeowners, Steven Wynn and Kay Glenn noted the Morelli House was integral to local entertainment history and was exemplary of Mid-Century Modern design. Since the house was the only house in the Estates constructed with a crawl space, it could be moved.[11] Wynn and Glenn determined that the Molasky Group, on their behalf, should appeal to the Junior League of Las Vegas to relocate the house to a parcel on Bridger Avenue adjacent to the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District with the intention of preservation. (The Bridger Avenue parcel was purchased with the assistance of the Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs).

On September 30, 2001, the League rescued and relocated the Morelli House to Bridger Avenue.[12] There was no way to save the decorative screen imbedded in the ground, Morelli's music room built on a concrete slab, nor the front yard's concrete carport and the swimming pool. Following the move, the screen has been reconstructed and the Junior League intends to reconstruct the music room. Although the front yard of the Bridger Avenue parcel does not comfortably allow for the reconstruction of the carport or the swimming pool, the parcel does allow for the reconstruction of the music room addition, which Morelli added after the house was built.

The Morelli House continues to be integrated within its environment, despite relocation, and the house is sited diagonally to the corner with a circular drive fronting the dwelling.[13] The circular driveway memorializes the original front-yard swimming pool. Foliage complements features of an earlier time, while rock groundcover conforms to drought resistant landscape codes. The rear façade, which once faced the second fairway, now faces the new site's northern perimeter. The rear façade faces north just as it had in its original location.

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[8] Heather Rawlyk. "Former D.I. Homeowner tells of decline of golf estates," *Las Vegas Sun*. Monday, November 10, 2003.

[9] Grace Long. "Wynn sues homeowners in battle for control of D.I. Association," *Las Vegas Sun*. Friday, November 3, 2000.

[10] Adrienne Parker. "Rift between Wynn, estate residents grow," *Las Vegas Sun*. Tuesday, May 28, 2002.

[11] Hess, House Essay, 6.

[12] Mohor, "House finds a New Home" *Las Vegas Sun*. October 1, 2001

[13] Hess, 6.

The loss of integrity as a consequence of the relocation is mitigated at the front façade to a degree by the proximity of the Las Vegas High School, now the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing and Visual Arts. The institution focuses on education in the arts, a mission Morelli strove to promote. More importantly than merely being adjacent to a historic district is the fact that the Morelli House is situated in a neighborhood: had it remained at its original location, it would have been surrounded on all sides by high-rise developments, isolated and without any ability to be part of a neighborhood with yards.

In addition, the front façade faces south to the street, which it did in its original location. To the rear, a multi-story apartment complex rises to the northwest of the Morelli House. The Junior League has mitigated this aspect of the setting by maintaining an expansive backyard that continues to communicate the feeling of a setting that allowed for open space to the rear of the house. At the perimeter to the rear and side, the Junior League has erected compatible concrete block screening matching the walls Morelli used at various places around his house. Manicured trees and bushes add additional screening, obscuring the development that compromises the view to the rear of this new location. As the vegetation matures, the effect will increase. In addition, a circular concrete path in the backyard recreates a similar feature at the house's original location and completes the mitigation of the setting.

Despite the new setting, the exterior and interior remain intact. As previously indicated, the most significant argument that can be made with regard to the integrity of the resource directs attention to the house's interior, which remains pristine, faithfully preserving the space as it was when the Morellis lived there. Changes that have resulted from the move and the subsequent loss of integrity to the setting are not to be underestimated, but efforts mitigate this on the outside, and the degree of integrity on the inside represents preservation implemented at the highest standard.

In its new setting, the Morelli House is one of the few Mid-Century Modern homes in the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood Historic District vicinity, however, the distinctive architecture complements the other historically-important buildings within the district. The nearness to downtown Las Vegas makes the Morelli House serviceable as a community cultural venue and as a meeting place for organizations promoting volunteerism. The Morelli House Public Program provides public access to view the house and to learn its architectural and historical significance. The Junior League of Las Vegas has restored the Morelli House, constructed in 1959 and relocated in 2001, in both its exterior and interior appearance in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitation*.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☒ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☒ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Entertainment and Leisure

Period of Significance

1959-1971

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Antonio Morelli

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Hugh E. Taylor, Antonio Morelli, Richard Small

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for the Morelli House reflects Morelli's career in Las Vegas extending from his residence in the house, beginning in 1959 and concluding with his retirement in 1971.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Special Consideration for the Morelli House includes Criterion B, for relocation to avoid demolition and to initiate preservation and rehabilitation as well as Criterion G, for the period of significance reflecting Morelli's career, which includes years that are less than five decades ago.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #__________
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # __________
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # __________

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: __________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __________

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Summary

In 1959, Antonio and Helen Morelli built their home at 52 Country Club Drive within the confines of the prestigious Desert Inn Estates, overlooking the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. In 2001, to save the home from demolition, a fate which befell the other houses within the Estates, the Morelli House was relocated to a parcel at Ninth Street and Bridger Avenue. At its new location, the Morelli House is owned and operated by the Junior League of Las Vegas, who faithfully maintains the 1959 appearance of the home while rehabilitating it as an office, event space, and history museum and gallery. The Morelli House is the only surviving resource where the remarkable story of Antonio Morelli can be interpreted. The house was his place of residence throughout the period of his contribution to Las Vegas history, and as the only architectural remnant associated with the maestro, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B.

The Morelli House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the emerging image of Las Vegas as an international capital of the entertainment industry, and for Antonio Morelli's association with the famed "Rat Pack." Because no other resources survive that are related to the emergence of the Rat Pack, the Morelli House can be regarded as having national significance. This nomination, however, does not present a context for the importance of the Rat Pack, and so it argues that the resource has local significance related to the story of how Las Vegas grew into an internationally important center of entertainment.

In addition, the Morelli House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B at the local level for its association with builder and owner, Antonio Morelli, who was vital to the community through his work as music director at the Sands Hotel and through his extensive involvement in community-wide musical activities. Antonio and Helen Morelli's house is the only known remaining resource associated with his career and influence in Las Vegas. The couple lived in the house and entertained guests during the span of his Las Vegas career. Since no other resources survive, this house represents the only physical opportunity to interpret Antonio Morelli's remarkable career and contribution.

Because the structure has been moved, its integrity is diminished and this nomination does not argue for listing under Criterion C. The house is, nevertheless, a remarkable example of its period, and so this nomination documents the architectural significance of the resource without arguing for its listing under this criterion. The Morelli House is an excellent example of an upper-middle-class, Mid-Century Modern style residence as they were developed locally in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a period of the city's flamboyant and rapid growth. Although the resource has been moved, the outstanding degree of its integrity, particularly regarding its significant interior spaces, combined with its excellent expression of this architectural style, warrants documentation under this criterion, presented for context only.

Criterion A

The Morelli House is significant for the critical role its owner played in developing a persona for Las Vegas as an entertainment capital of the world. Antonio Morelli set the standard at the Sands Hotel and Casino with creativity, musical perfection, and a classy presentation, affecting how Las Vegas stages would present themselves for the rest of the century and into the next. In particular, Morelli played a pivotal role in the début of the "Rat Pack," which first performed on his stage.

When Jack Entratter, president of the Sands Hotel and Casino, suggested that Morelli relocate to Las Vegas, the conductor had much to consider. In the post World War II era, with the popularity of the television, the East Coast theater circuit was declining. As a result, employment opportunities in traditional theater were becoming scarce. Morelli assessed that Las Vegas might be an unexpected opportunity worth pursuing. Las Vegas provided "a newly minted realm of entertainment,"[1] wherein Antonio Morelli would soon be known as "Maestro Morelli."

During what became his twenty year career in Las Vegas, Morelli helped transform the city into a popular, highly-regarded entertainment venue. Along with the celebrity headliners, Jack Entratter promoted Morelli's Las Vegas presence with regular billing on the Sands pylon sign reading "Antonio Morelli and his Music" or "Antonio Morelli and his Orchestra." People came to know Morelli. As stated by a local vocalist, it was hard to miss him with "his mustache, elegant demeanor and Caddy Convertible. He was ...an elegant gentleman in our city."[2]

When Morelli first arrived in town, he realized, "the Sands was the envy of the other hotels" with its headliners, including Frank Sinatra, Danny Thomas, Red Skelton, Lena Horne, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr.[3] Morelli also realized, that the Sands 18-member orchestra may have been the best, but it was simply a brass band since "string sections were not the norm" in Las Vegas.[4] To meet the string needs of entertainers, the Copa Room Orchestra was augmented by up to 32 instrumentalists.[5] Morelli sought to add a year-round strings section, and with perseverance, he succeeded. Union musician president Frank Leone stated this was "the significance of Antonio Morelli."[6]

Local musicians of the Sands' heyday in the 1950s and into the 1960s, agreed "playing at the Sands was the pinnacle of an entertainer's career," and "they all wanted to be part of the Morelli Orchestra,"[7] The orchestra leader provided stiff demands mandating that instrumentalists read music instantly or "you were out the door."[8] Nevertheless, Morelli conceded to musicians with promise, especially strings players. Bertine Corimby, a local violinist and viola player, shared her audition terror when Morelli requested a scale of perfect fifths on the Viola, for which she was unprepared to play. Nevertheless, she was inducted into the orchestra as the second viola player.[9] Corimby noted her skills improved as a result of performing with Morelli.

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[1] Ortwein, Dr.Dennis, Written Testimonial of Antonio Morelli, March 25, 2011.

[2] Deacon, Maxine, Written Testimonial on Antonio Morelli, March 2011.

[3] Frank Leone, panelist, "Morelli and His Music," Las Vegas Academy, Auditorium, April 2 2009.

[4] "Morelli," Panel Discussion.

[5] Coffer, 20.

[6] Leone, "Morelli," Panel discussion.

[7] Leone and Mulidore agreed "everyone wanted the job."

[8] Ibid.

As Morelli strove to improve the Copa Room Orchestra's level of performance, he had unpleasant exchanges with musicians resentful of his unrealistic demands who tended "not [to] like him."[10] Some musicians never forgave him. In the Coffer interview, Morelli delicately addressed this issue explaining when he first arrived, most Las Vegas musicians "were young men from the territory bands and smaller communities."[11] As the popularity of the town grew, qualified musicians from all quarters sought positions in his Strip orchestra and, by the mid 1960s, over one third of his players were "men with degrees in music" who had performed "in important orchestras around the world."[12]

While Morelli held his musicians to an exacting standard, he insisted on the same level of performance for himself. As the Sands' music director, Morelli spent considerable time writing orchestra arrangements. Although headliners brought musical directors with them, Morelli would write new scores or recompose an evening's musical composition to present a better, integrated production. On occasion, the music flowed easily; at other times, he deliberated over troublesome arrangements until late at night. When an extended effort became necessary, each orchestra player might receive a new part the following day.[13] Morelli involved himself knowing it was his responsibility to ensure that quality productions were featured in the Copa Room of the Sands, known widely as "the Jewel of the Strip."[14]

Morelli is credited on a multitude of albums for showroom recordings of celebrity entertainers in the Copa Room.[15] Morelli's efforts improved entertainers' performances, and as stated by singer Florence Henderson, Morelli made "every show seem like opening night."[16] The shows performed nightly in the Copa Room. Crowds gathered to see world-famous, celebrity headliners on the "intimate stage."[17] To avoid performance mishaps, Morelli was attuned to the disposition of his soloists and performers.

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[9] Corimby,Bertine, "Morelli and His Music" 2009. Panelist Ken Hanlon attested to Bertine's exceptional talent as a violinist and viola player.

[10] Mulidore, Jimmy, "Morelli." Proctor, Cork. Oral recollection of musician's feelings. Telephone conversation, March 12, 2011.

[11] Coffer, 20. Reddie, written testimonial.

[12] Coffer, 20-21. Reddie's written testimonial makes it clear over time Morelli regretted the clash he had with some of these men he came to respect. The "Strip" is the term often used for Las Vegas Boulevard.

[13] Coffer, 21.

[14] "Morelli," *Program*, 10.

[15] "Sands Hotel: Legends of the Copa Room" <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sands_Hotel (accessed April 10, 2011).

[16] Coffer, 21.

[17] Ken Hanlon stated that with the stage's physical shape, drinkers along the side were within close proximity of the players. Hanlon, "Morelli and His Music," Las Vegas Academy Auditorium, April 2, 2009.

Morelli shared this strategy: "When I'm conducting for a star ...I talk to him twenty minutes before the performance. I want to hear the sound of his voice. See how he feels. Has he eaten too much? Missed dinner? Any of these things can influence a performance. I want to coordinate my thinking with that of the artist; feel with him; identify with his mood."[18] In this way, the Maestro found few surprises once a performance started. Morelli had control and this was important because "when he was on stage, it was his world."[19]

Although there were many special moments for Morelli leading the Copa Room Orchestra, his most publicized occasion was in 1960 when Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr. joined Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford in Las Vegas for three weeks while filming *Ocean's Eleven*. Amazingly, this was the first time these men performed together on stage. The group entitled their Copa Room collaboration: *The Summit at the Sands*. In short order, the group would be known as the Rat Pack.

The name switch was not well received by Frank Sinatra because as it was explained in an article by the singer's younger daughter Tina, "Rat Pack" is what Lauren Bacall had dubbed the daily, visiting friends of her ailing husband, Humphrey Bogart.[20] Yet, for whatever reason, the Rat Pack name stuck and, more importantly, the notable group - in its Sands engagement and with Morelli leading the orchestra - became famous under the odd moniker.

During this time, as Helen Morelli recounted to Massini, the Rat Pack appeared nightly at the Sands. "[They] would do two shows ... and they spent the whole time playing tricks on one another."[21] The audiences were enthralled. Photographs depict a tall, smiling, elegantly mustachioed Morelli on stage in front of his orchestra, laughing at the Rat Pack's clowning and stage antics.[22] This was one of the most successful collaborations of Morelli's career and his collection of photographs preserved in the house indicates his awareness that something wonderful was occurring. Images of the Rat Pack became internationally famous.

Photographs of the Rat Pack on stage show Sinatra and Morelli standing as close colleagues, however, this was not always the case. As written in the *Review Journal*'s news article "Standing Ovation," the two often "locked horns."[23] As each man had become accustomed to controlling others, personality disagreements were expected, but even with Frank Sinatra, Maestro Morelli stood his ground. The association of the Rat Pack with the Morelli House is by virtue of the importance of Morelli to the origin of the act. Otherwise, the connection of the house to the Rat Pack is weak, but it survives as the best remaining resource associated with this nationally-famous entertainment phenomenon.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Corimby, "Morelli" panel discussion.

[20] Newman, Melinda, "Tina Sinatra Laments the Loss of Her Dad Frank and the Death of Rat Pack Cool," <http://www.spinner.com> (accessed February 14, 2011).

[21] Massini, 2.

[22] Historical photograph on display in Morelli House.

[23] "Standing Ovations", *Las Vegas Review Journal*, April 2, 2009. At the "Morelli and His Music" event, Jimmy Mulidore described a few sparring incidents between Sinatra and Morelli.

Besides the Morelli House, one other surviving resource is known to have limited association with the Rat Pack. On June 20, 1965, three members of the Rat Pack - Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr. - performed at the Kiel Opera House in St. Louis, Missouri, the only time members of the Rat Pack performed together on television. The television appearance solidified the mythic status of the Rat Pack in the popular mind, but the Copa stage was the most important place in association with the legend of the Rat Pack. The Kiel Opera House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 11, 2000. Its association with the Rat Pack is limited because only three members performed there and only on one occasion, but the resource has significance because of its association with the only televised performance of the Rat Pack, albeit with just a part of the group. The performances at the Sands and in association with Morelli were seminal and therefore of greater importance. Unfortunately, the Sands was demolished, leaving the Morelli House as a unique survivor of this Las Vegas story, which quickly attained national significance.

Additional photographs at the Morelli House document a multitude of celebrations and noteworthy occasions for the orchestra leader. Two instances provide examples. One occasion was the celebration of the Sands' twelfth anniversary with celebrity guest star Danny Thomas, a Copa Room favorite. A photograph depicts a beaming Thomas with Entratter, Morelli, and an elaborate cake depicting the Sands Resort as it would appear with its planned 17-story tower, joining the many multi-story Strip resorts built after 1952.[24] A second occasion is believed to have occurred in 1964[25] when President Lyndon Johnson visited Las Vegas during the final days of his election campaign against Barry Goldwater. Morelli was photographed with President Lyndon Johnson and Nevada's two prominent U.S. Senators, Howard Cannon and Alan Bible. No other individuals appeared in the formal photograph.

An unexpected privilege for Morelli in leading the Copa Room Orchestra was the opportunity to interact with a pillar of the East Coast musical community. In the early 1960s, Leonard Bernstein, the Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, arrived for scheduled performances at the Las Vegas Convention Center. During his visit, Morelli invited Bernstein to his home for dinner when the two apparently discussed the ill-mannered nature of the western audience. Though Bernstein was initially embarrassed and insulted that audience members were not stationary during his concerts, he chose to overlook the unintended slights. He surmised it was of greater importance to appreciate that these artistically-deprived music patrons were coming voluntarily to hear him. Morelli attested (to Coffer) that Bernstein's words regarding the West's lack of cultural exposure strongly affected him.[26] This conversation perhaps renewed Morelli's resolve to continue with his time-consuming pop concerts for the people of Las Vegas (see discussion below under Criterion B).

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[24] Historic photograph on display at Morelli House. The Sands Hotel, as originally built, was a single-story resort.
[25] Alvarez, Brian. LVCVA, verified photograph archives show casino signs welcoming Lyndon Johnson to town October, 1964. March 4, 2011.
[26] Coffer, 25.

Besides Bernstein, others visited Morelli's home. On weekends and following performances, Strip headliners, musicians, prominent locals, colleagues, and treasured friends often congregated at the Morelli House. Jimmy Mulidore indicated that "the parties were truly magnificent."[27] Morelli loved inviting people to his home. He believed his dwelling defined his essence and was "one of the greatest challenges of [his] life."[28] Mozart, the poodle, greeted visitors at the door, while Helen prepared meals in the ultramodern kitchen. On these occasions, performers often gathered to rehash performances or to collaborate on musical compositions. The Morelli House became an entertainment center for the musical icons who entertained Las Vegas.

In 1987, the *Las Vegas Sun* publisher, Hank Greenspun, fervently proclaimed that the Sands was the "resort that made Las Vegas famous."[29] Although earlier casinos opened along the Strip and established the corridor as a center of gaming and entertainment, the opening of the Sands on December 15, 1952 occurred when the city began an unprecedented period of Strip construction and visitor growth. The impressive list of hotels on the Strip during these glory days is as follows: Dunes (1955), Riviera (1955), Hacienda (1956), Tropicana (1957), Stardust (1958), Castaways (1963), Caesars (1966), Aladdin (1966), Circus Circus (1968) and the off Strip hotels, Landmark (1969) and International (1969), which was renamed Hilton Hotel in 1971. Of the key hotels built from 1946 to 1971, only the Sahara, the Riviera, the Tropicana, Caesars, Circus Circus, and the Hilton remain, and several of these are likely to be demolished in the near future.[30]

The Sands' domination of the Strip could not last. As Las Vegas Boulevard and its magnificent hotels began to thrive, visitors and headliners explored new venues. It was no doubt hurtful to both Entratter and Morelli when, for example, Dean Martin, who was given a minority shareholder's interest, contracted at the Riviera or when Frank Sinatra contracted with Caesars Palace.[31] Nonetheless, with significant casino and city advances within a short period of time, both Entratter and Morelli were instrumental in the growing stature and popularity of the Las Vegas Strip worldwide.

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[27] Mulidore, "Morelli" panel discussion.

[28] Morelli was referring to the thrill of working with his hands. Coffer, 22

[29] Greenspun, Hank, editor's column, *Las Vegas Sun*, 1987, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/history, (accessed March 20, 2011).

[30] History, Las Vegas. Casino map. *Las Vegas Sun*. <http://lasvegassun.com/history, (accessed March 15, 2011). Thanks to historian Michael Green for assistance with this material.

[31] Ken Hanlon, telephone conversation with Sally Rycroft, March 8, 2011.

Criterion B

The Morelli House is the only surviving resource that recalls the remarkable career of Antonio Morelli and his contribution to the growth of the cultural scene of Las Vegas. Morelli occupied the house during the duration of the Las Vegas career when he was establishing the city as an entertainment legend, but also as he was personally investing his time to change the cultural climate of the community.

Antonio Morelli was born July 22, 1904 in Rochester, New York, spending his youth in Erie, Pennsylvania. His father, Cesare Carlos Morelli, a professor of fine arts and a symphony flautist provided the young Morelli with early training in violin and piano. In 1914, Morelli's father took him to Italy where he remained for eleven years to pursue studies at Milan's San Celso Military Academy and the Royal Conservatories of Music in Milan and Parma.[32] Morelli returned to the States in 1925 before his twenty-first birthday and became the pianist for a concert group at a hotel resort on the East Coast.

Morelli spent the next years travelling to Dallas, Denver, New Orleans, Chicago, and New York to conduct theater and civic orchestras. For two seasons, he served as musical director of the St. Louis Musical Opera. In 1935, while assisting as orchestra leader for the newly opened RKO Palace Theater in Albany, New York, he married Helen Collins. Morelli continued to "travel the entertainment circuit...guest conducting for the pit orchestras at Warner, Paramount, RKO, Pantages, Shubert and other theater chains when stage shows still accompanied the movie feature."[33] In the Coffer interview, Morelli noted the musicals he conducted for the Shuberts: "*High Button Shoes*, with Eddie Foy; *Spring in Brazil*, with Milton Berle; *Three to Make Ready*, with Ray Bolger; *Touch and Go*; Victor Herbert's *Eileen*; Friml's *Vagabond King*; *Bohemian Girl*; and many others..."[34] He enjoyed his life because there was "nothing like the excitement of a Broadway opening."[35]

Despite the excitement of life, life itself was painful for Morelli. Morelli lived with back pain, arthritis, and bursitis; the searing pain of these afflictions frequently left him bedridden. On one occasion he underwent major surgery, which, as he told Coffer, confined him to his home for forty weeks. Morelli used the time to compose music: "This period encompassed some of the major accomplishments of his career, including such commissions as writing the music for three shows at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto in association with Leon Leonidoff, senior producer at Radio City Music Hall."[36] He was able to do what he loved while his body recovered. During this time,

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[32] Hess, House Essay, 2.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 21.
[36] Coffer, 22, 16; "Morelli and His Music," *Program*, Junior League of Las Vegas, Las Vegas Academy Auditorium, April 2, 2009, 3.

Morelli adopted his trademark look, which would make him famous in Las Vegas: the courtly mustache with waxed pencil-tip endpoints. As Morelli shaped his career, he also shaped his identity.

Morelli's captivation with Las Vegas was remarkable given his first encounter in the desert. In 1953, Morelli traveled to Southern Nevada with the Olsen and Johnson comedy team. During their Vegas stopover, the blowing winds aggravated his allergies and caused severe discomfort.[37] Morelli became aware of the tribulations of arid living, and was relieved to return to New York City. However, this was not to be his last trip to Nevada. Following discussions at the Copacabana Club, Jack Entratter, president of the Sands Hotel, offered Morelli the resort's coveted musical director's position. For the classical conductor, the plum of this flattering proposal was the Copa Room Orchestra.[38]

Despite his earlier desert experience, Morelli tentatively accepted Entratter's proposal and in the summer of 1954, he flew to Las Vegas to explore the feasibility of employment. As Morelli disembarked the airplane, he was greeted by the unrelenting 117 degree summer heat. Morelli discovered the dry heat alleviated his constant arthritic pain. He was thrilled and in a telephone conversation with Helen, proclaimed he never felt better.[39] The health benefits alone were reason to relocate to Las Vegas. Entratter and other casino operators were delighted Morelli would consider their offer, as they believed the Strip's economic growth required attracting the Eastern elite and a high-end audience.[40] The casino operators believed Morelli's elegant presence and polished manner on the Copa Room stage would counter negative rumors about Las Vegas and would entice wealthy, educated tourists. As Hess asserted in his article, "Morelli truly represented a new icon for the city: a man very unlike the rougher, gangster type figures popularly portrayed as making up Old Vegas"[41] Bill Reddie, a longtime Las Vegas composer and musician, who would ultimately succeed Morelli as the Sands' music director, commented on the Maestro's appearance when he arrived in the city: "With his waxed moustache, wavy white hair and authoritative demeanor, (Morelli) gave one the impression of someone who had been lifted out of the nineteenth century and somehow plunked down in Las Vegas.[42]

Though Morelli's distinguished look and impeccable credentials were in order, the casino operators' confidence in his innate ability to draw a wealthy crowd was tenuous. It would not be easy to offset the perception that crime syndicates managed many of the seven "luxury" motor inns - the Sahara, El Rancho, Thunderbird, New Frontier, Desert Inn, Sands, and the Flamingo – along Fifth Street (aka

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[37] Hess, Alan, "A New Architecture for a New City." *The Morelli House.* Junior League of Las Vegas, 3. Coffer, Helene L., "Antonio Morelli: From Broadway to Las Vegas," *Sage,* Summer, 1967, 22.
[38] Hess, 3.
[39] Massini, Jerry, written copy of oral interview of Helen Morelli, 52 Country Club Lane, Desert Inn Estates, Las Vegas, NV. March 6, 1976, 1.
[40] Panel discussion at "Morelli and His Music" noted the downtown casinos drew in a more country western crowd and the Strip moved to attract the wealthy nightclub types and Eastern audience. Copa Room was named after the Copacabana Club.
[41] Hess, 4.
[42] Reddie, Bill, email testimonial on Antonio Morelli. March 13, 2009

Las Vegas Blvd or "the Strip").[43] Furthermore, Las Vegas was perceived as a hot, dusty, crude and garish community, only acceptable for the downtown's country western crowd. There remained the question if such unpleasant characteristics would be tolerable to the Strip's potential market back East. Even Helen, who ultimately embraced the desert lifestyle, offered critical reflections about the early community. She described the Strip as a wild, two-lane, not totally paved, roadway lacking lights and signals. She was also stunned that each casino had its own "sewer plant" culminating in foul smells all over the city when "the wind [blew]... the wrong way."[44] The desert city's rough lifestyle mixed with touches of glamour and glitter, perhaps burdening it with what Hess referred to as an "unflattering *nouveau rich* perception."[45] To lure people westward, Morelli needed magic in his conductor's baton. In hindsight, Morelli's career was indeed magical.

The provincial nature of Las Vegas may be why Helen decided, at the outset, to remain at their home on Long Island. In 1957, when it was evident that her husband was comfortable with his Sands' position and desert surroundings, she relocated to Las Vegas. They retained their New York home until 1959, when they concluded that along with their poodle Mozart, they would be spending their lives in Las Vegas. With the proceeds of the sale of their eastern home and the security of a Las Vegas job, the Morellis began to plan and construct their carefully-crafted dream home.

Antonio and Helen Morelli's acceptance of Southern Nevada benefitted the development of Las Vegas. Morelli exceeded the Strip leaders' desires and expectations. His presence and stage effort lured the well-heeled traveler to visit Las Vegas and to lavishly spend money. In addition, he extended himself to help the ever-growing flock of "relocated" western locals to unite as a community. With Morelli, visitors and locals felt welcome in the emerging desert town.

Besides Morelli's important career at the Sands, outlined above under the discussion for Criterion A, he had other important roles within the community. As stated, Jack Entratter, at the urging of his cohorts, brought Morelli to Las Vegas to offset the city's impaired image. Job security on the turbulent and notoriously competitive Las Vegas Strip never existed, but given that Morelli was retained as the Sands' music director until his health failed in the early 1970s, it is evident his employers believed they acted wisely in retaining him. Morelli's accomplishments surpassed everyone's expectations. The story does not end with his role on the Strip. On a wider examination of Morelli's life in Las Vegas, his contributions include not only his professional accomplishments as orchestra conductor at the Sands, bringing music to the tourists, but also his personal accomplishments during his off-duty time as the city's cultural architect, bringing music to the residents of Las Vegas.

After putting down his baton in the Copa Room, Morelli began assembling various musicians from along the Strip to provide free public concerts. These orchestras, which were much larger than the commercial Strip orchestras, first performed as the *Shirt Sleeve Symphonies* and later as the *Las Vegas*

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[43] "History - Las Vegas," *Las Vegas Sun*. <http//www.lasvegassun.com/history> (accessed Mar 2, 2011).
[44] Massini, 5.
[45] Hess, "Architecture", 3.

Pop Concerts.[46] In 1955, Morelli held the first local concert at Cashman Field. His effort to perform this event, with 125 brass-playing musicians giving freely of their time, began months in advance of the scheduled summer performance.[47] The concert went from 8:00 pm to midnight, and crowds filled the stands with wild cheers of approval. A major challenge at this event was transporting the entertainers and musicians between the Strip casinos to Cashman Field so they would be there in time to perform for their shows. The Las Vegas solution was to whisk them in and out via a sheriff's car. As Helen recalled, people paid $1.50 to $2.00 to attend this initial performance; future events cost less or were free.[48]

The first concert set the tone for future annual productions, and in 1959 when the Las Vegas Convention Center opened, Morelli had a venue to hold larger public concerts on a regular basis. For these public performances, Morelli formed a community chorus composed of 50 to 60 members of all age groups, as recalled by Dennis Ortwein, then a young teacher, who joined the chorus and participated in Morelli's musical performances. Ortwein stated, "Morelli was definitely a taskmaster, but he "achieved outstanding quality by skillfully motivating us all to get better."[49]

The Community Chorus was an important piece for Morelli in his plan to hold multiple public performances each year. Ortwein reflected, "what most distinguished Maestro Morelli was his amazing talent for bringing the community together for the spectacular concerts and holiday celebrations."[50] Morelli's annual series included an Easter Pageant in March or April, a Mother's Day Program in May, often an opera in June, a patriotic program in July, and a Christmas Concert in December.[51] On two occasions, Morelli also had a Jewish-focused program in February. Morelli said of his operatic efforts: "In Las Vegas, we have produced three operas in concert manner: Cavaleria Rusticana in English; Il Trovatore in Italian and Aida in two languages – Italian and English – in costume, to S.R.O. [standing room only] audiences. All local talent and an orchestra of sixty-five."[52] Through these lavish, regularly scheduled, free performances, the people of Las Vegas truly came to know Morelli. They appreciated his extraordinary effort on their behalf. Helen proudly stated that, in one publication, her husband was referred to as "the Toscanini of the Desert."[53]

The Convention Center and production equipment was, apparently, provided free of charge, and a Music Performance Trust Fund compensated the musicians, but Morelli personally financed what was not donated. Maxine Deacon, one of his young production singers, verified "he gave generously of his time and money to bring music to [the people of] Las Vegas."[54] Helen corroborated stating, "I could have had many mink coats with all the money he took out of his own pocket to pay for these things."[55] Helen supported her husband's efforts because, "he enjoyed it and the people enjoyed it."[56]

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[46] "Morelli," *Program*, 4.
[47] Massini,4.
[48] Massini,4.
[49] Ortwein, written testimonial.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Coffer, 23.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Massini, 3.
[54] Deacon, written testimonial.

Antonio Morelli provided the best performance at each event. Corimby indicated they were "spectacular productions" and at one event there was "every type of imaginable animal; big ones, too."[57] Morelli accomplished this because, as Ortwein stated, "Morelli had access to everyone ... a call [by Morelli] to a business, a construction company or a publicist would bring positive action."[58] They gave what they could to make the event successful; what they could not, Morelli covered.

Celebrity performers and soloists, including Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, and Red Skelton agreed to perform *pro bono* on his community stage. When the caliber of the celebrity headliners who gave of their time circulated, other performers agreed to participate for free. Helen enjoyed sharing the story that Dean Martin, on the eve of his act, jokingly stated his need for rest as the following day he would be "in concert at the Convention Center."[59] Amazingly, where many working Las Vegans could not afford to see Strip entertainers in the casino showrooms, Morelli enabled "these locals" to see favorite personalities "for free" at his pop concerts on Sunday afternoons. A sense of community emerged.

The Good Friday Concert, held in 1966, was for Morelli and others his most spectacular liturgical performance with an estimated 10,000 spectators. The people in attendance were regally entertained. It was reported that the gospel of St. Matthew was dramatized by a cast in period costume. Danny Thomas served as the Gospel narrator. A well-known local district judge was commentator and Pontius Pilate was played by the chairman of the Clark County Commission.[60]

The following year, Morelli wrote a musical version for an Easter Sunday Sunrise Service. This service also had an overflowing crowd. Morelli proudly announced that for this event his wife "designed and cut out one hundred costumes."[61] The number of participants in these productions required intense planning on the showman's part, but it apparently provided a greater level of excitement for the audience and, thus, made the extra effort worthwhile to him.

In an interview with Coffer five years before his retirement, Morelli commented that his community musical accomplishments "were his special pride." The opportunity to share the magic of music and all its variety with his fellow Las Vegans was the spark that provided life's special meaning. In his words, "The idea is to expose the people to all kinds of music: give them a little bit of everything. Nothing... can take the place of a concert hall when it comes to a musical education. Why is that? If you get an audience together and play to them for two hours ...a program that includes Brahms, Strauss, a little Wagner, and a little Sousa on the same program – you've achieved something."[62] And, he added, "...people ...seldom get any variety... [but] when they come to my concerts I will put Sousa, Gershwin, Verdi, Rachmaninoff, with a Liszt piano concerto on the same program. I want to hold their interest and that's the way I do it."[63] Morelli, a true cultural architect, hoped that, with time, the attendees would grow in refinement and develop manners appropriate for these occasions. He could see he was having a certain measure of success. In the meantime, Morelli contented himself knowing concert attendance numbers were, in showman's terms, "off the charts."

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[55] Massini, 3.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Corimby, "Morelli" panel discussion.
[58] Ortwein, written testimonial.
[59] Massini, 4.
[60] Coffer, 24.
[61] Ibid. 22.

Despite professional success, Morelli's health was failing. In 1970, after rebounding from a stroke he subsequently suffered smaller strokes. In 1971, following a brain hemorrhage, he retired as the Sands' orchestra leader.[64] On June 17, 1974 just shy of his 70th birthday, Morelli quietly passed away at his home with Helen was at his side. In final a tribute to her husband, Helen was quoted in the *Sun* as saying the people of Las Vegas had, "lost a good and dear friend in the music field."[65] Morelli "set the bar" for Strip entertainment and through his pop concerts, promoted the cultural growth of Las Vegas. Although sometimes controversial, Morelli strove for musical excellence in himself and in those around him.

Though the Clark County population was approximately 60,000 in 1954 at the time of the classical musical director's arrival, the area grew to nearly 360,000 people in 1974.[66] Moreover, during his years in the Copa Room, Morelli saw Las Vegas establish its place on the world entertainment stage.

In 1977, three years after Morelli's death, the University of Wyoming recognized the significance of the conductor in the history of entertainment and cultural development; that institution became the repository for many of his musical papers.[67] After the many historical photographs and recordings of his community concerts preserved by Helen Morelli were given to the Junior League of Las Vegas Endowment Fund, the organization donated them to the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and to the Arnold Shaw Popular Music Research Center at the University of Nevada.

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[62] Ibid. 25.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Reddie, written testimonial.

[65] Obituary

[66] All Strip hotels are in the county. Even at that time, the visitor volume at any one time added greatly to the perceived population of Las Vegas. In 1980, Clark County's population would hit 463,087. Clark County's present day population is 1,951,269.

[67] Letter verifying receipt from University of Wyoming, 1977.

Criterion C[68]

The Morelli House warrants documentation under Criterion C, as a remarkable example of modernistic style of architecture. The Morelli House was built in 1959 in the prestigious Desert Inn Estates overlooking the second fairway at the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. The Desert Inn was the fifth casino property to be built along the Las Vegas Strip, and was the Strip's premier resort for over a decade. Although the resort was the first country club community built in Las Vegas, it was not originally designed as a housing development. The first homes on the resort grounds were for the use of owner and developer, Wilbur Clark, his executives, and high rollers, including Howard Hughes. Desert Inn Estates was developed in 1952, two years after the opening of the Desert Inn Casino and Resort. The 65 parcels encircled the golf course to the east of the hotel, with open desert land beyond. A few years later, 15 interior parcels were developed under the name of Desert Inn Estates 2. The average parcel size was .25 acre with double lots interspersed. Desert Inn Estates was the first Las Vegas development with modern architectural design. As such, notable individuals opted to build homes in the Estates, including Keely Smith and Betty Grable and her husband, bandleader Harry James. Bob Miller, Nevada's governor from 1989 to 1999, grew up in Desert Inn Estates. The modern design aesthetic appealed to many, especially to Antonio and Helen Morelli.

The Morelli House was built in 1959 by Antonio Morelli, who desired a modern style for his house in the Desert Inn Estates and collaborated with the Sands Hotel and Casino's carpenter foreman, Richard Small. Together the two men designed and ultimately built the house at 52 Country Club Drive after Las Vegas architect Hugh E. Taylor drew the plans. Richard Small was the master carpenter at the Sands, but he also built several custom homes in town. Small first came to Nevada from Montana during the depression to work in the silver mines at Silver Peak. Although he traveled back to Montana, he returned to Las Vegas during World War II and later worked as the carpenter foreman at the Nevada Test Site, where he built structures used in the atomic tests.

Richard Small's son, Michael, was a teenager when the Morelli House was built. Michael and his older brother Richard helped their father with the construction. Michael Small recalls construction details, as well as conversations with Morelli about his vision for his home. According to Small, the Morellis were influenced by Rudolf Schindler's "window wall" houses in Palm Springs, and Philip Johnson's "Glass house" in New Canaan, Connecticut, Helen's home town.[69] The Las Vegas house was to be comfortable and casual. Natural wood was important to Morelli, as it was to Schindler. Small recalls redoing the redwood ceiling three times before Morelli was satisfied.

That Rudolf Schindler served as inspiration for the Morelli House is appropriate, since Schindler developed his architectural style in the 1920s in the sunny climate of southern California, an area that has strongly influenced Las Vegas architecture for decades. Schindler studied architecture and engineering in his native Austria. Inspired by architect Adolf Loos, Schindler came to the United States in 1914. Disappointed with America, Schindler was planning to return to Austria when he secured a position at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesen studio. In 1920, Wright sent Schindler to Los Angeles to oversee construction of the Barnsdall house, known today as the Hollyhock house. Upon completion of the Hollyhock house, Schindler stayed in California, opening his own practice. By 1928, Schindler developed a particular vision of architecture that is reflected in Morelli's plans for his home, "The sense for the perception of architecture is not the eyes, but living. Our life is its image."[70]

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[68] As indicated above, the discussion under Criterion C draws heavily from the corresponding discussion in Harmon, "Morelli House." In addition, the importance of the Morelli house design is discussed in Ronald M. James and Elizabeth Safford Harvey, *Nevada's Historic Buildings: A Cultural Legacy* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2009).

[69] Michael Small, personal communication May 9, 2001.

Philip Johnson, an early proponent of the International Style, worked with the early modernist masters from Europe, including Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and J.J.P. Oud, along with masters from the United States, including Schindler, and his colleague and fellow Austrian, Richard Neutra. Beginning in 1946, Johnson undertook the building of his own home in New Canaan, Connecticut that would interpret "the worship of glass we inherited from [German pioneers] Scheerbart and Taut."[71] Johnson's ideals are also reflected in the Morelli House: "I was building an American house. I like to get outdoors quickly, so I raised it [only] two steps above the ground...."[72]

Philip Johnson went on to other design realms, like postmodernism, but Schindler, who died in 1953, practiced his art in the temperate regions of southern California, as well as the desert environment of Palm Springs, with a climate similar to Las Vegas. Even his early houses sported flat roofs with wide overhangs, and window walls to bring the outdoors in and meld the building with the site. One of Schindler's design principles was that nothing be tied down, "Once an architect begins to worry about tying things down and about correct spacings, he arrives only at formal harmonies, and these have little to do with living."[73] The Morelli House displays this sense of not being tied down, as Morelli's vision was to avoid formalism in order to create a place for living, rather than for show.

The Morelli House drew upon the legacies of two great architects, and helped establish for Las Vegas a tradition of distinctive and adventurous architecture. Despite the fact that some integrity was lost when the house was moved from its original location along the Desert Inn Golf Course, the Morelli House remains a significant element of Las Vegas' architectural history. And since its interior represents a remarkable, uncompromised degree of preservation, the Morelli House includes one of the best examples of period design in Southern Nevada.

The modern style of the Morelli House was revolutionary for Las Vegas. Other custom homes of the time were merely expanded ranch-style forms. The Morelli House brought vaulted ceilings to the desert and the concept of integrating the building with the site, particularly effective in a golf course development. In a May 2, 2001 telephone conversation, UNLV professor of architecture, Janet White, interpreted the site plan of the Morelli House and its relationship to its setting. The window-wall façade, facing the golf course, was the front of the home - its monumental façade. The site was of the utmost importance to the structure, as were its proportions. The original plans show a different front arrangement, with a 6-foot-high block wall set in zig-zags, creating a dynamic approach. The pool was built behind the wall, sheltered from the street. Morelli's neighbors built pools on the golf course side of their homes, providing no privacy for swimmers, and interfering with the buildings' interplay with the golf course. Morelli understood the relationship between building and grounds and between exteriors and interiors; he admired clean lines paired with eschewed ornamental plantings.

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[70] McCoy 1960:149-150.

[71] Webb 1994:36.

[72] Webb 1994:36.

[73] McCoy 1960:174-175.

According to Robert Fielden, a prominent architect in Las Vegas, and Alan Hess, a well-known preservationist and writer specializing in Mid-Century Modern architecture, the Morelli House exemplifies, particularly in its interiors, the California Movement of the American International School of that style. The Morelli House fits architects McAlester and McAlester's label of "Contemporary," another term for American International, a derivative of the International style seen since the 1910s in the works of R. M. Schindler and Richard Neutra in Southern California and of the internationally-known architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.[74] The Morelli House also meets the design intent of "Populuxe" which author Thomas Hine describes as "fun, fashionable, fantastic and futuristic."[75] Directed by owners, Antonio and Helen Morelli, architect, Hugh E. Taylor, incorporated Mid-Century Modern features in his design such as the widely overhanging eaves and expansive glass windows.[76] The modernist houses of R. M. Schindler and the "Glass house" of Philip Johnson inspired the Morellis and Taylor. According to Alan Hess, the Morelli House is a "mature and excellent design that illustrates the popularity and progressiveness of Modern architecture in mid-century Las Vegas."[77]

To quote Hess about this resource, even after the move: "The historic Antonio and Helen Morelli House preserved by the Junior League of Las Vegas...is a vibrant reminder of the newness, optimism and style in Las Vegas in the mid-twentieth century. The house's bold horizontal lines, glass walls, open plan, and natural materials embody the fundamental tenants of [Mid-Century] Modern architecture and Modern living in that period."

For nearly twenty years, Antonio and Helen Morelli made this modern house their home. In 1978, following Antonio's death, Helen sold the home to Kay Glenn. Glenn had been Howard Hughes' press secretary from 1951 until the millionaire's death in 1976. For over twenty years, Glen meticulously maintained the home and property. In 2000, Steve Wynn purchased the Desert Inn with the intent to demolish it, the golf course, and the homes in the Desert Inn Estates. In 2001, the Junior League rescued and relocated the house for rehabilitation on their Bridger Avenue parcel.

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[74] Dr. Robert Fielden, oral interview by Carole C. Terry, May 25, 2010. Alan Hess, "A New Architecture for a New City." *The Morelli House*. (Las Vegas: Junior League of Las Vegas, 2008) 25. Lee McAlester and Virginia McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) 482.

[75] Thomas Hine. *Populuxe*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 38.

[76] Taylor was inspired by architect Wayne McAllister when creating the large, sheltering roof at the Morelli House entrance. Hess, "Architecture." 10.

[77] Hess, "Architecture." 19.

Conclusion

The Morelli House, constructed in 1959 and relocated in 2001, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B. Additional documentation under Criterion C is provided for information only. Although the structure has been moved, it nevertheless has an outstanding degree of integrity, particularly regarding its significant interior spaces, combined with the fact that it is an excellent expression of this style of architecture. The interior, in particular, preserves a place that survives as the best setting to interpret the important story of Antonio Morelli, and if it were possible for him and his wife to return to the house, they would enter the front door and feel as though they had never left. In addition, it is important to understand that the Morelli House is the place where Antonio Morelli lived throughout his Las Vegas career, and it is the only surviving place where the significant story of the maestro can be interpreted.

Given the relocation of the Morelli House, this nomination calls for an exception under Criterion Consideration B. The Junior League of Las Vegas has restored the Morelli House in both its exterior and interior appearance in accordance with the United States Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*. The house has been moved from its golf course setting, which was demolished for twenty-first century development. The Junior League selected a lot adjacent to the Las Vegas High School Neighborhood National Register Historic District so that its front façade continues to face the street and it continues to open to architecture from the early mid twentieth century. Although the Morelli House dates to the late mid twentieth century, which is only modestly represented by the neighboring historic district, it can be regarded as a complement to the district. In addition, the significance of the Morelli House is rooted in the arts, which are promoted with the high school's function as a center for education in the arts.

This nomination also calls for an exception under Criterion Consideration G. The Morelli House is significant as an expression of the growth of the entertainment industry as expressed by Morelli's career extending from his residence in the house, beginning in 1959 and extending to his retirement in 1971. The house is so well preserved from the date of its construction, that in itself, the resource is clearly anchored in a period that exceeds fifty years. Nevertheless, Morelli's involvement in the growth of the entertainment industry and his personal contribution to the cultural milieu of Las Vegas extended to the end of his career in 1971. There consequently must be consideration of the resource as an expression of a period of significance that includes years that are less than five decades ago (Special Consideration G). Listing the Morelli House under Special Consideration G is justified because the resource dates to and is clearly an expression of the late 1950s, Morelli's career began during the 1950s, and the Morelli House is a rare survivor of resources related to the critical period of Las Vegas development during the 1950s and 1960s.

Today, as the current owner, the Junior League of Las Vegas utilizes the Morelli House in a way that represents a minimal amount of intrusion to the interior space. There are no additions to the structure, and the Junior League has invested considerable resources screening the backyard and recreating the Morelli's patio. Because the backyard is sizeable, an architecturally-compatible concrete block wall combined with trees and bushes create a vista that seems more natural than would otherwise be possible in its new urban context. The result is an expansive backyard where maturing vegetation is increasingly promoting a feeling of a secluded space in keeping with what the Morellis originally enjoyed.

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Panel Discussion and Program
2009 "Morelli and His Music" Junior League of Las Vegas, Las Vegas Academy Auditorium, Las Vegas, NV. April 2, 2009.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .51 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	667482	4003867	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The National Register boundaries for the Morelli House include the .51-acre parcel identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 139-34-701-002, Clark County, Nevada.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The National Register boundaries for the Morelli House conform to the parcel on which the house is sited.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Junior League of Las Vegas together with Ronald James and Sara Fogelquist, NV SHPO
organization date April 9, 2012
street & number 861 East Bridger Avenue telephone 702-822-6536
city or town Las Vegas state Nevada zip code 89101
e-mail

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

See Continuation Sheet.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Junior League of Las Vegas

street & number 861 East Bridger Avenue telephone 702-822-6536

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89101

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Representative Photographs
(0001-0012)

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Rex Windom
Date: 2009
Description: Exterior, front façade. Facing N.
Number: 0001
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0001

Description: Exterior, front façade. Facing N.
Number: 0002
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0002

Description: Interior, foyer with partition.
Number: 0003
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0003

Description: Interior, living room.
Number: 0004
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0004

Description: Interior, living room and dining room.
Number: 0005
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0005

Description: Interior, dining room with partition.
Number: 0006
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0006

Description: Interior, breakfast nook.
Number: 0007
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0007

Description: Interior, kitchen.
Number: 0008
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0008

Description: Interior, kitchen, looking into foyer and dining room.
Number: 0009
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0009

Description: Interior, master bathroom.
(Recent repairs to damaged tile not reflected in photograph.)
Number: 0010
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0010

Description: Interior, master bathroom faucet with "AM" monogram.
Number: 0011
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0011

Description: Interior, guest bathroom.
Number: 0012
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0012

Supplemental Context Photographs
(0013-0019)

Name: Morelli House
City: Las Vegas
County: Clark
State: Nevada
Photographer: Melissa Gonzales
Date: 2011
Description: View from living room towards backyard and northern property perimeter. Facing NW.
Number: 13
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0013

Description: View of backyard with patio. Facing E.
Number: 14
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0014

Description: View towards eastern property perimeter. Facing E.
Number: 15
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0015

Description: Rear façade. Facing SW.
Number: 16
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0016

Description: View towards western perimeter. Facing W.
Number: 17
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0017

Description: Oblique view of front façade and front yard. Facing SW.
Number: 18
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0018

Description: View from the front entrance towards southern property perimeter. Facing S.
Number: 19
NV_Clark_Morelli House_0019

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Morelli House
Name of Property
Clark County
County and State
NA
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Historic Images

Antonio Morelli
Unknown date
NV_Clark_Morelli House_1

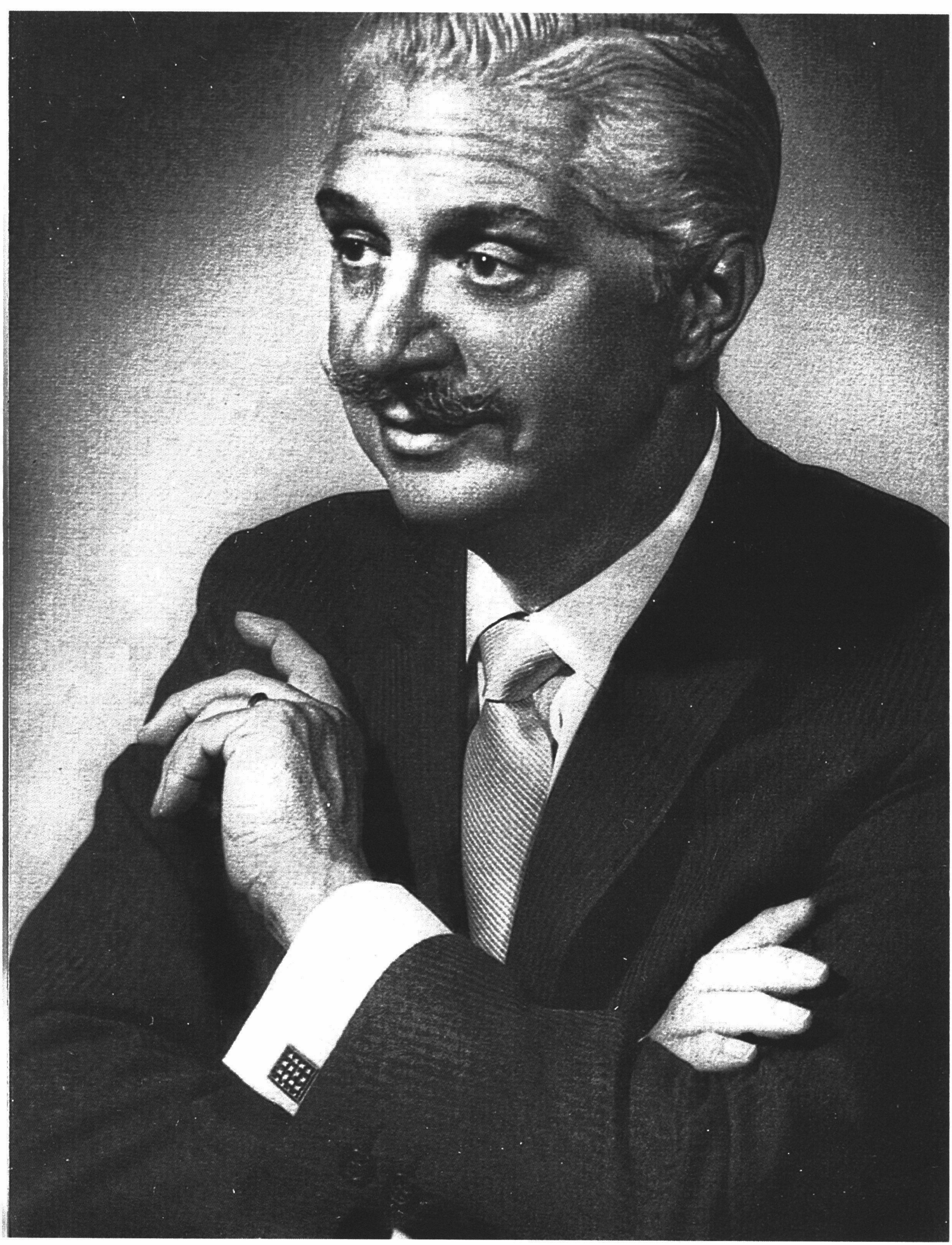
Senator Alan Bible, Antonio Morelli, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Senator Howard Canon
1964
NV_Clark_Morelli House_2

Antonio Morelli and the Copa Room Orchestra
Unknown date
NV_Clark_Morelli House_3

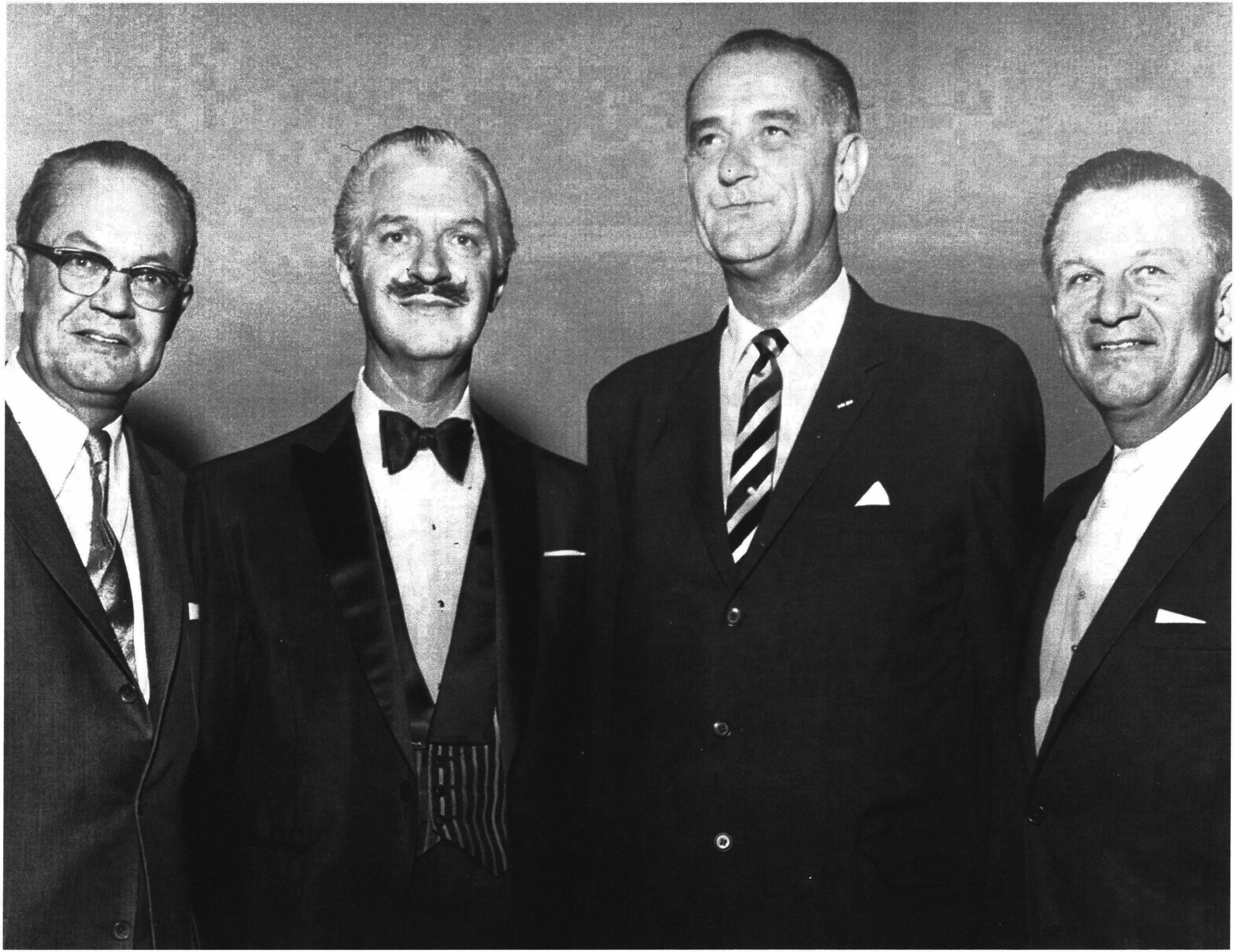
Jack Entratter, Danny Thomas, Antonio Morelli at the 12th Anniversary of the Sands
1964
NV_Clark_Morelli House_4

Dean Martin, Antonio Morelli, Frank Sinatra
1960s
NV_Clark_Morelli House_5

Don Rickles, George Burns, Mr. and Mrs. Nat King Cole, Carlos Gastel, Antonio Morelli
1960s
NV_Clark_Morelli House_6



NV_ Clark_ Morelli House _ 1



NV_Clark_Morelli House_2

NV_Clark_Morelli House_3

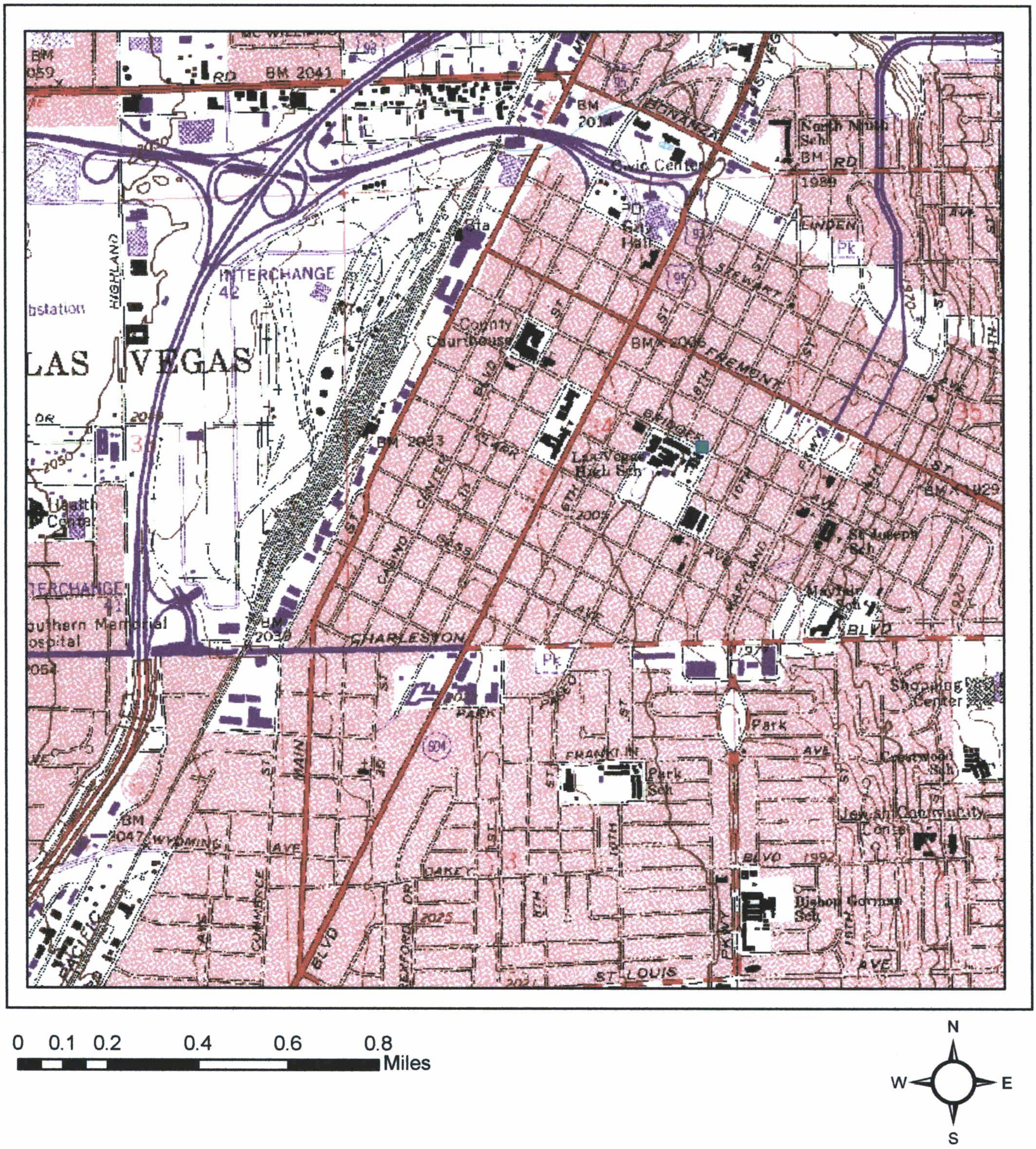
NV-Clark-Morelli House-4.

NV- Clark - Morelli House - 5.

To the Senators

NV-Clark-Morelli House-6.

Morelli House, Las Vegas, Clark County, NV


LAS VEGAS
INTERCHANGE 42
BONANZA
Civic Center
North Ninth Sch
City Hall
LINDEN
STEWART
County Courthouse
FREMONT
BRIDGER
Las Vegas High Sch
St Joseph Sch
CHARLESTON
MAIN
Park
FRANKLIN
Park Sch
Shopping Center
Jewish Community Center
Bishop Gorman Sch
WYOMING
OAKEY
ST LOUIS
Southern Memorial Hospital
HIGHLAND
BM 2041
BM 2033
0
0.1
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0.4
0.6
0.8
Miles
N
W
E
S

Legend

🟩 Morelli House

Las Vegas NW
Made by NV SHPO
December 2011

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name	County, State	Reference Number
Morelli House	Clark, Nevada	11001086

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

_X_ Nomination Form (page 1)

___ Photographs (#:)

___ USGS Map

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 11001086 **Date Listed:** 6-3-12

Property Name: Morelli House

County: Clark **State:** NV

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusion, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

by Barbara Wyatt
Signature of Keeper

6-3-12
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination

Section 8. Areas of Significance

This Supplementary Listing Record amends the area of significance to "Entertainment/Recreation" and eliminates "Entertainment and Leisure" and "Community Planning and Development," which are indicated on page 4 of the nomination. The nomination makes the case for eligibility in terms of Entertainment/Recreation and for an association with Antonio Morelli.

Notification and Distribution

The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.
This notice was distributed to the following:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority, without nomination attachment

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Morelli House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Clark

DATE RECEIVED: 4/17/12
DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY:
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/03/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11001086

DETAILED EVALUATION:

X ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT 6-3-12 DATE

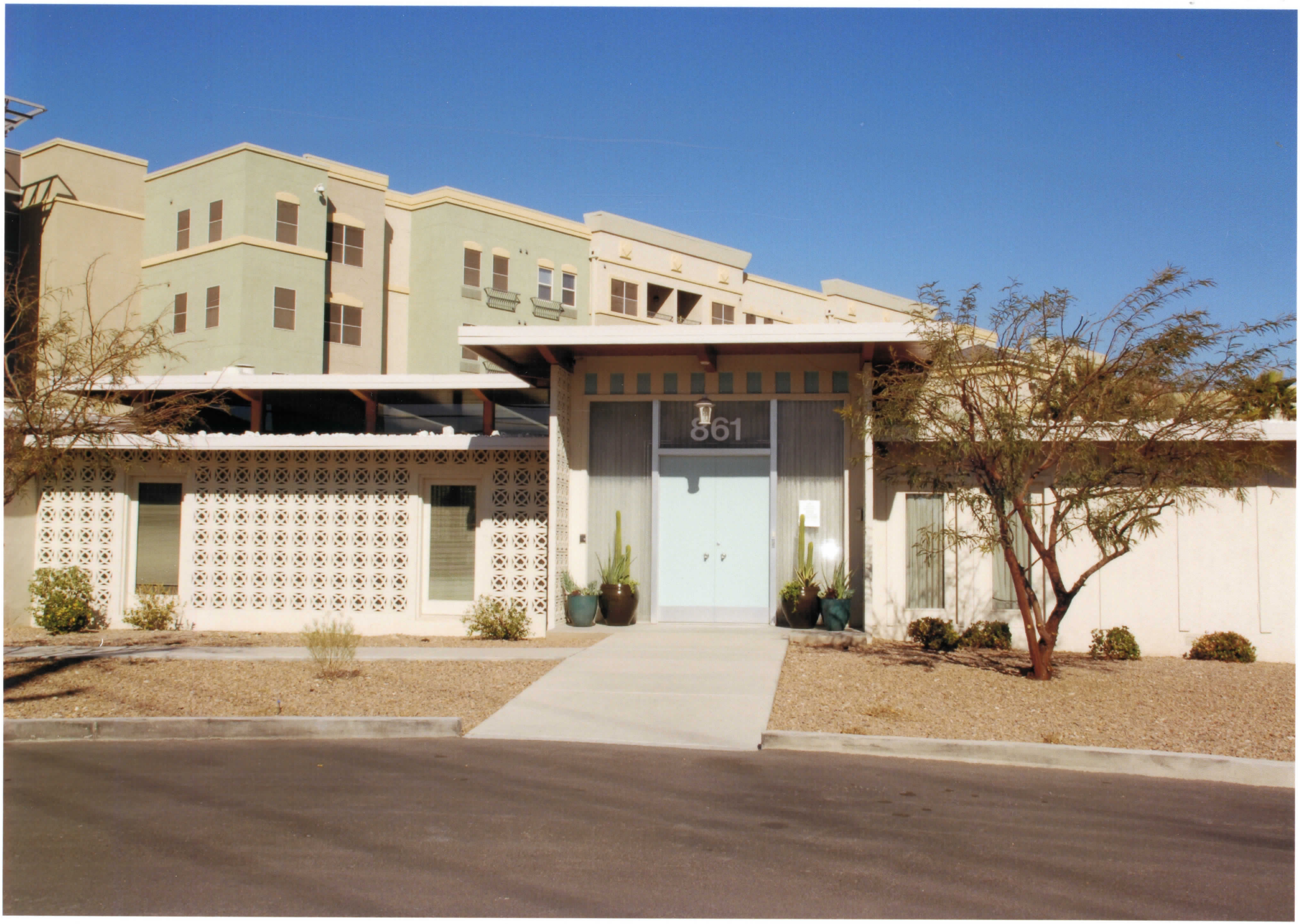
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Morellli House in Las Vegas is listed in the National Register under criteria A and B for its association with Entertainment /Recreation in Las Vegas and for its association with the musician Antonio Morelli. As music director at the Sands Hotel, Morelli wielded considerable influence in the emerging entertainment industry in Las Vegas. The house he and his wife Helen owned overlooking the Desert Inn Golf Course was a gathering place for famous musicians. The period of significance for the property is 1959 to 1971, the years Morelli occupied the house. The entire neighborhood was demolished, except the Morelli House, which was moved to another Las Vegas location.

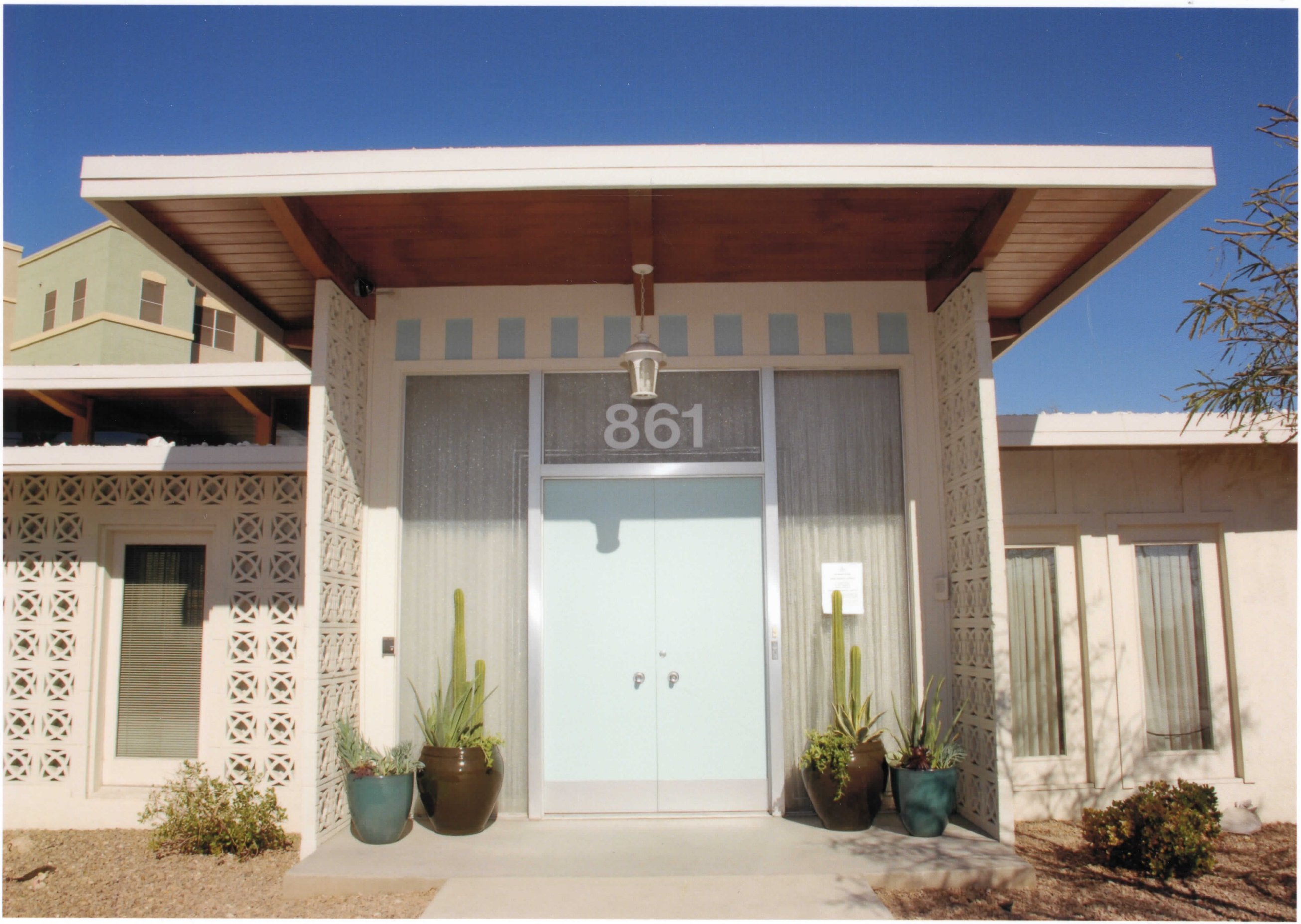
SEE SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

RECOM./CRITERIA A & B
REVIEWER Barbara Wyatt
DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE 202-354-2252
DATE 6-3-12

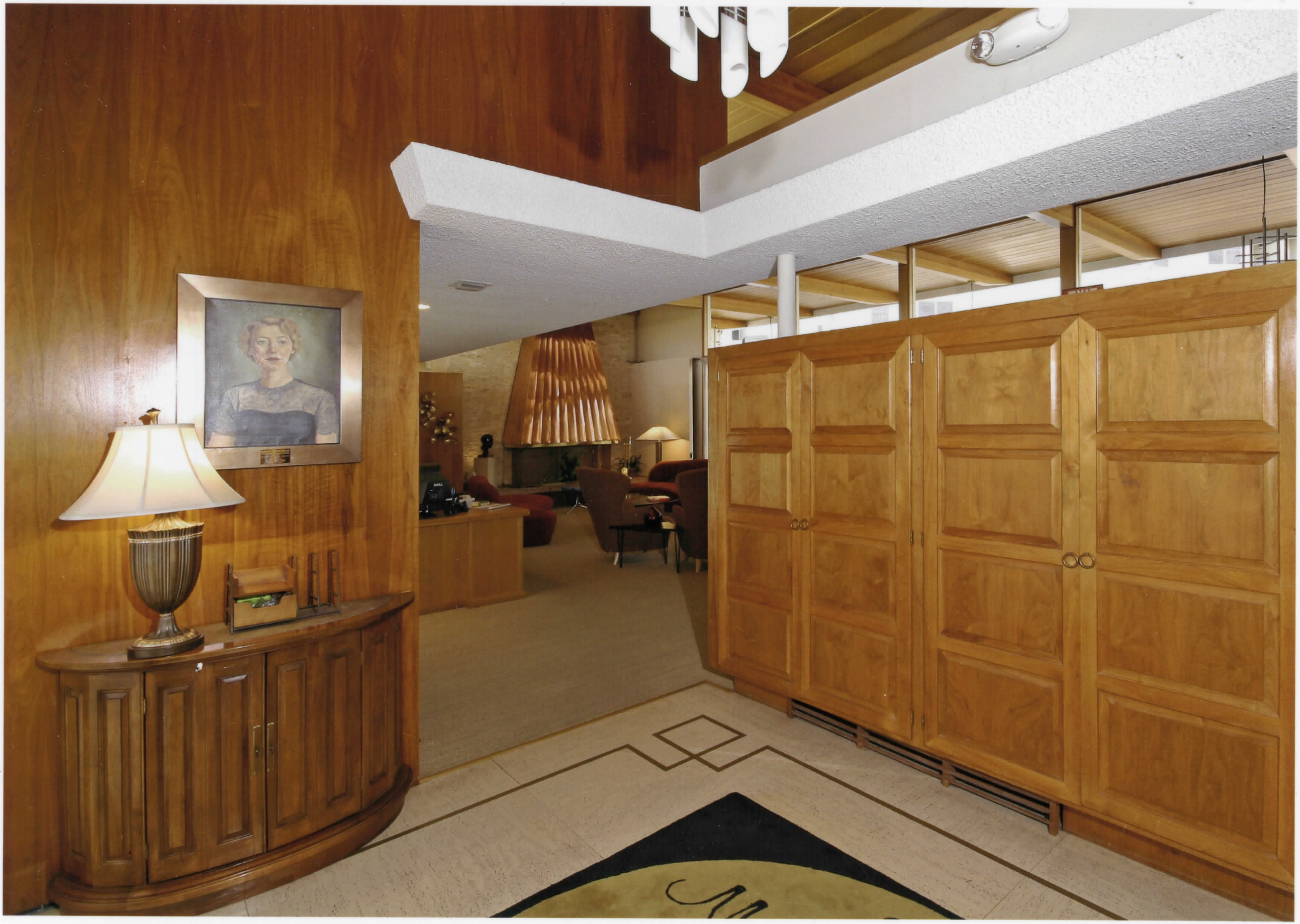
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N


861

NV—Clark—Morelli House—0001

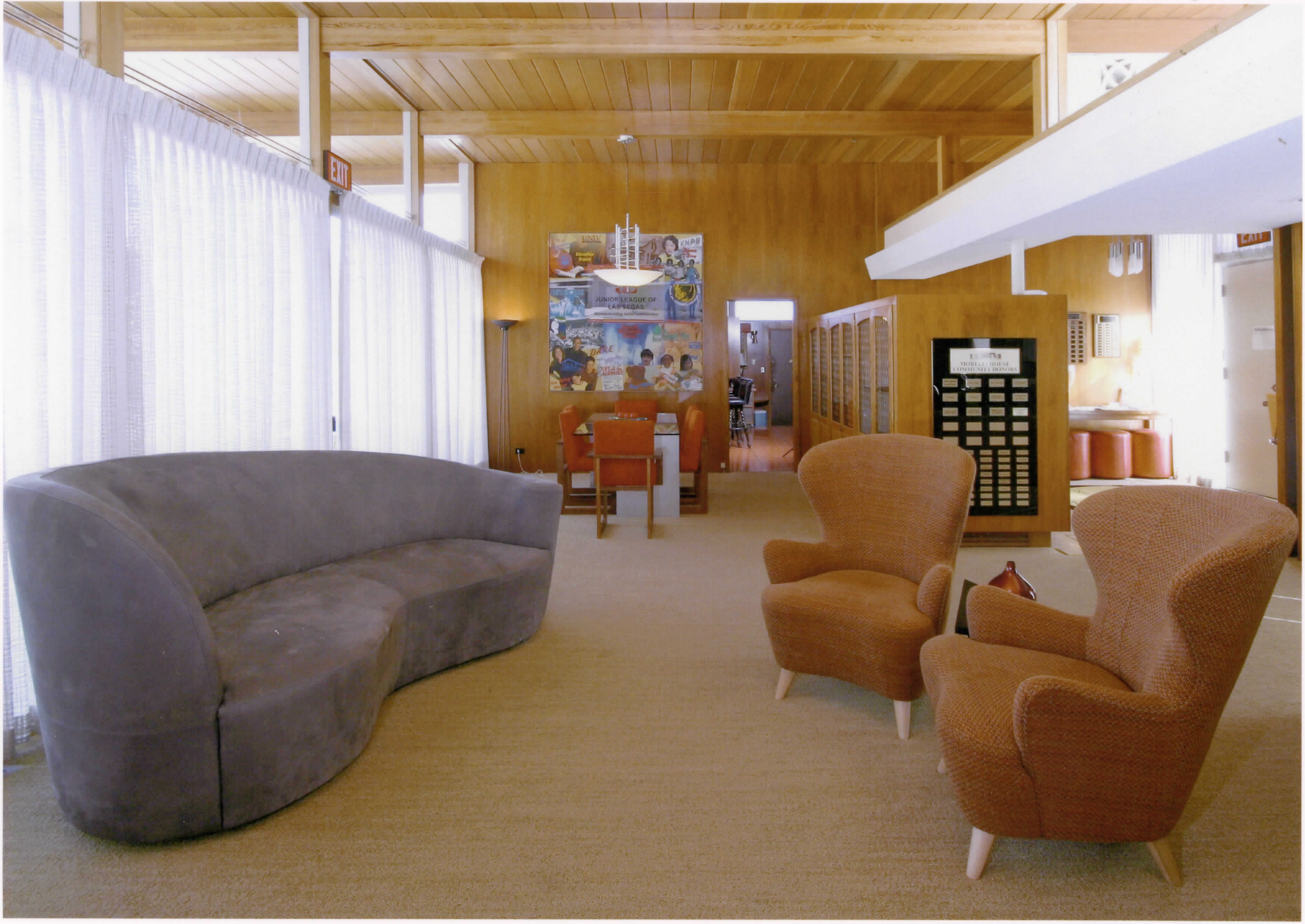

861

NV_Clark_MorelliHouse_0002



NV-Clark-Morelli House—0003.

NV-Clark_Morelli House_0004


EXIT
UNLV
KNPR
JUNIOR LEAGUE OF LAS VEGAS
D.A.R.E
MORELLI HOUSE COMMUNITY DONORS

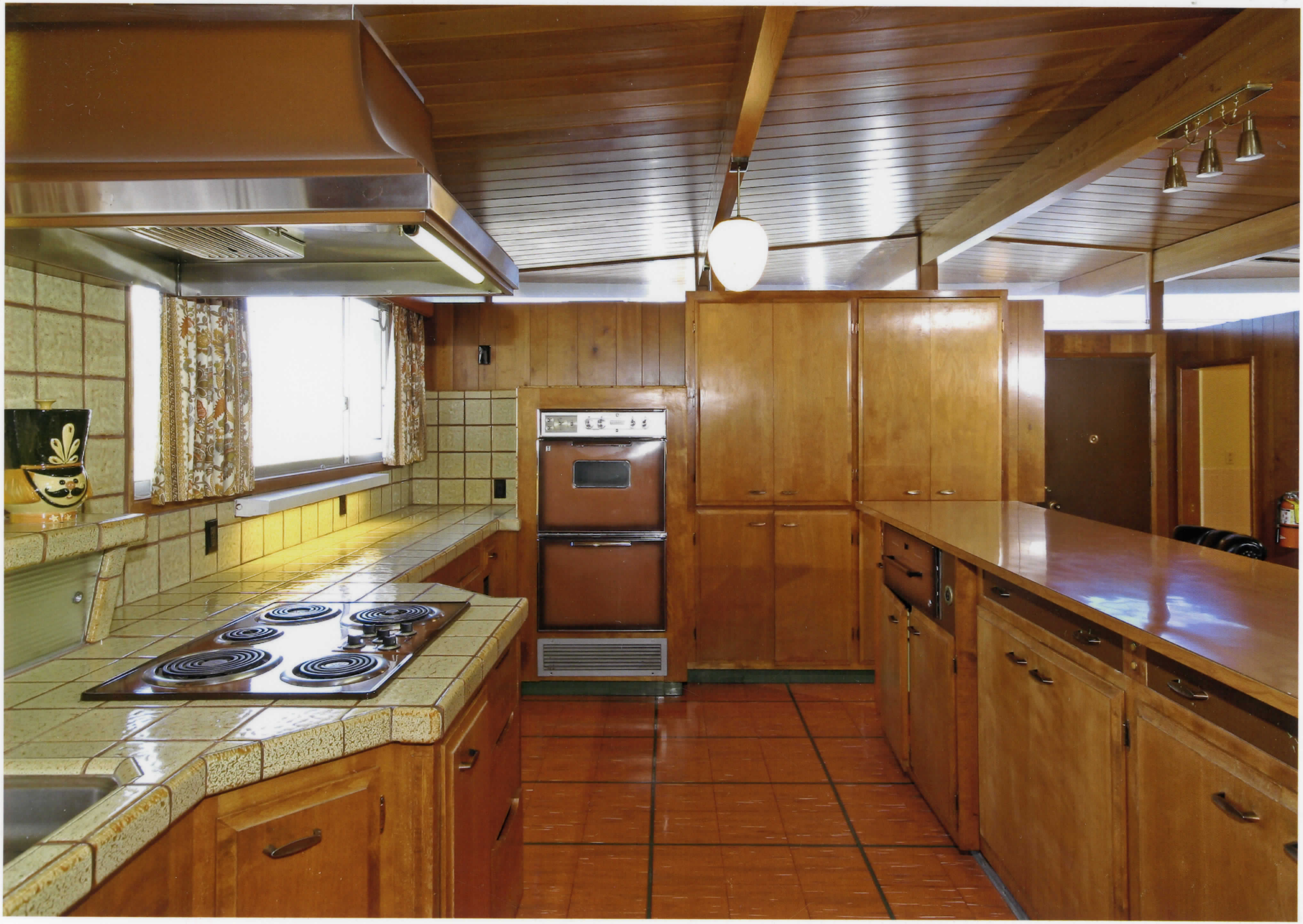
NV_ Clark_Morelli House_0005

UNLV
Reading for Smiles
Education Grants
Beckley House
FANTASY PARK
861
JUNIOR LEAGUE OF LAS VEGAS
Women building better communities
Focus on Nevada's Children 1985
Sun Youth Forum
Ronald McDonald House
The Shade Tree
D.A.R.E.
HELP Of Southern Nevada
ART at the AIRPORT
Kids Live in Las Vegas Too
Fire Safety Houses
Bear Project
Birthday Closet
EXIT

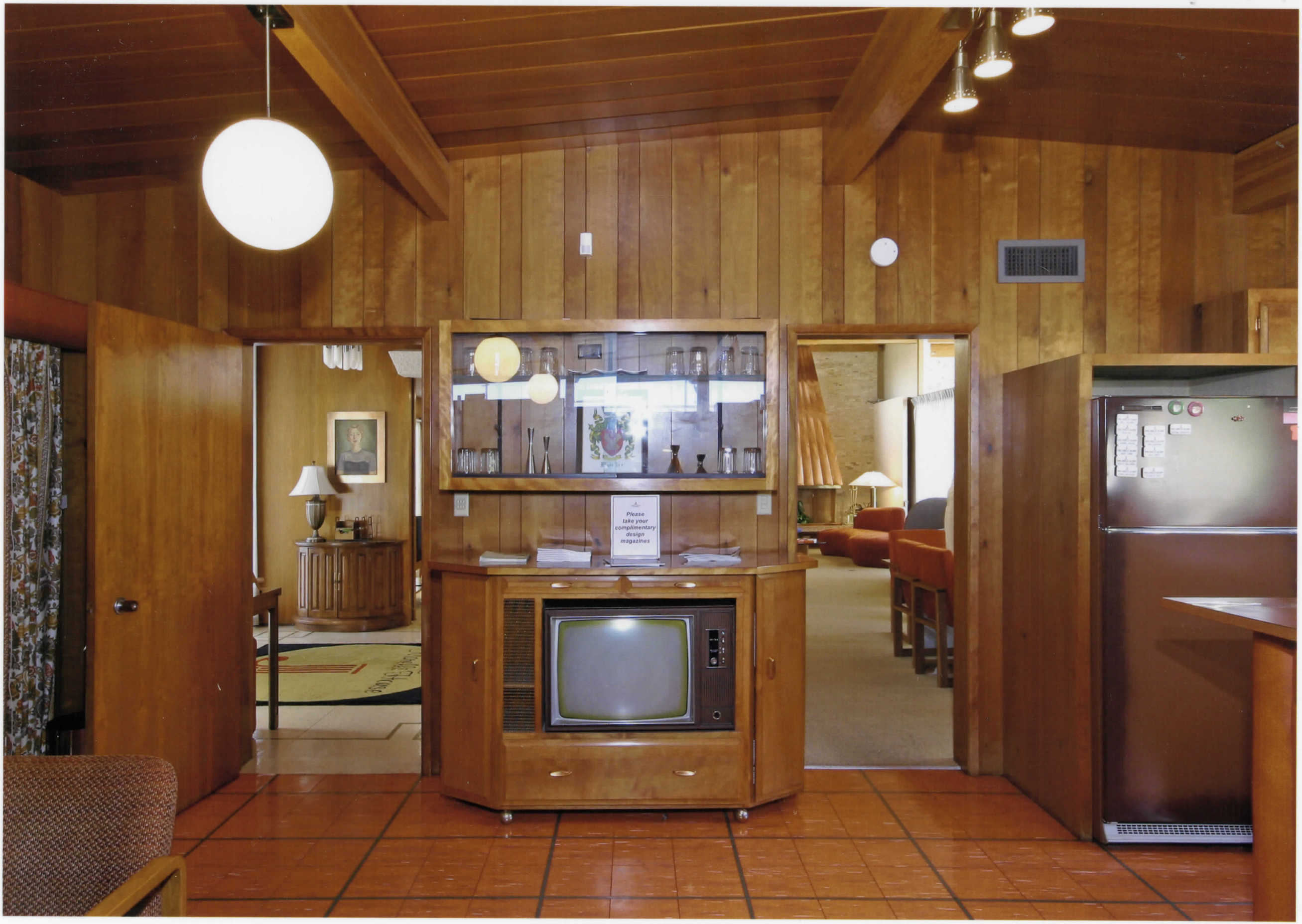
EPSON

NV-Clark_-MorelliHouse-0006

NV-Clark_Morelli House_0007



NV_Clark_Morelli House_0008


Please
take your
complimentary
design
magazines

NV-Clark-Morelli House-0009

NV - Clark - Morelli House - 010

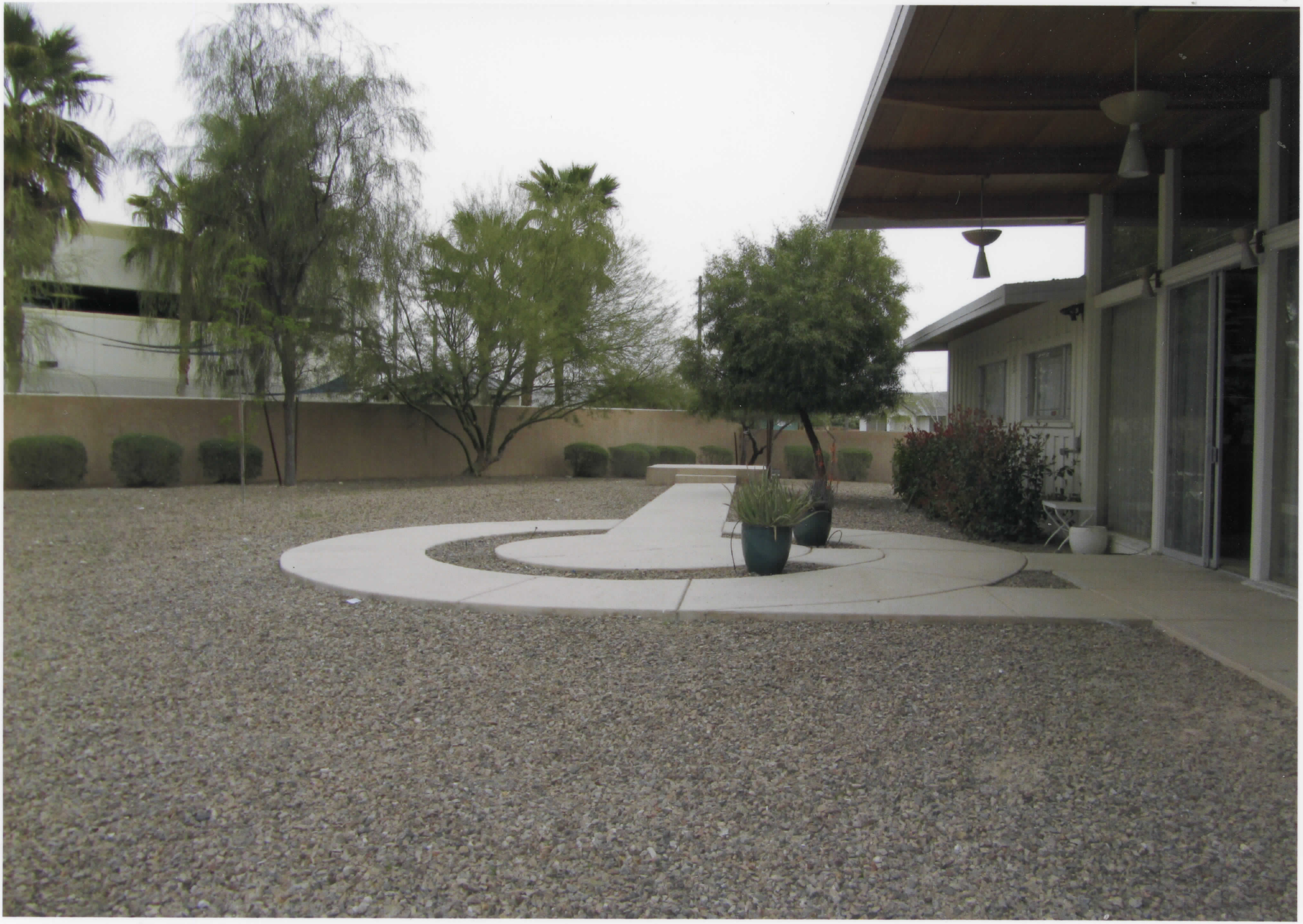
AM
AM

NV-Clark_Morelli House-0011

NV_Clark_Morelli House_0012

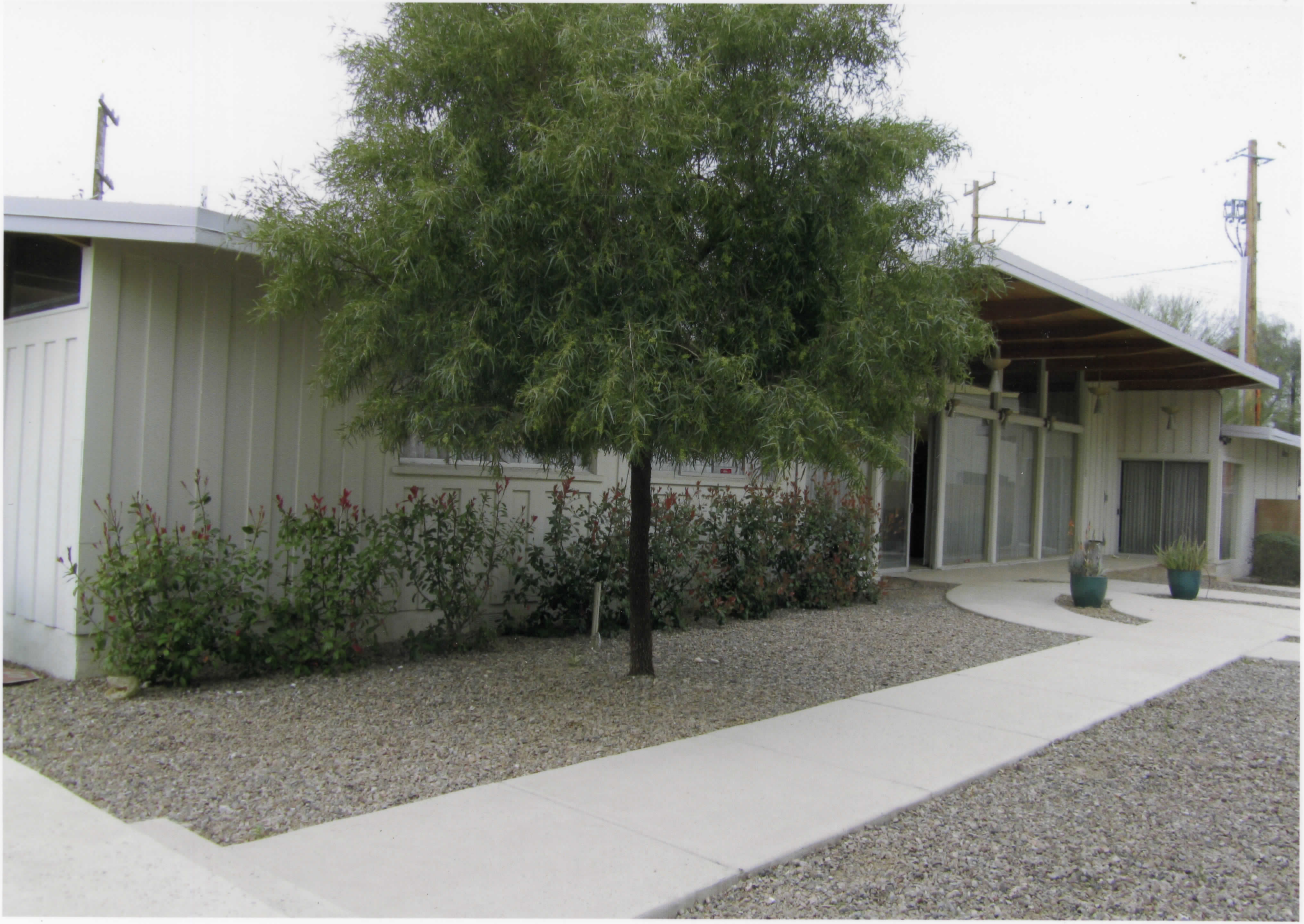
EPSON

NV_Clark_MorelliHouse_0013



NV_Clark__Morelli House_0014

NV_Clark_MorelliHouse_0015



NV_Clark_Morelli House_0016

NV_Clark_MorelliHouse_0017

NV_Clark__MorelliHouse_0018

300
319

NV-Clark_MorelliHouse-0019

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name	County, State	Reference Number
Morelli House	Clark, Nevada	11001086

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

___ Nomination Form

___ Photographs (#:)

_X_ USGS Map

LEO M. DROZDOFF, P.E.
Director
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

RONALD M. JAMES
State Historic Preservation Officer

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Address Reply to:
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701-5248
Phone: (775) 684-3448
Fax: (775) 684-3442

www.nvshpo.org

RECEIVED 2280

DEC 23 2011

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

December 14, 2011

Barbara Wyatt, Historian
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Wyatt,

Enclosed please find the following nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

Morelli House, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada

The Nevada Board of Museums and History approved the nomination at their quarterly meeting on December 2, 2011.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have questions regarding this correspondence please contact me by telephone at 775.684.3427 or by email at sfogelquist@shpo.nv.us.

Sincerely,

Sara Fogelquist

Sara Fogelquist
Architectural Historian

LEO M. DROZDOFF, P.E.
Director
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

RONALD M. JAMES
State Historic Preservation Officer

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Address Reply to:
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5004
Carson City, NV 89701-5248
Phone: (775) 684-3448
Fax: (775) 684-3442

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

RECEIVED 2280
APR 17 2012
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

April 13, 2012

Barbara Wyatt, Historian
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Wyatt,

Enclosed please find the following nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

Morelli House, Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have questions regarding this correspondence please contact me by telephone at 775.684.3427 or by email at sfogelquist@shpo.nv.us.

Sincerely,

Sara Fogelquist
Architectural Historian

Thanks for your help, Barbara! Please let me know if you have additional questions. Hope your week is off to a good start.
Sara